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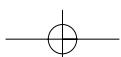
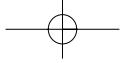
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COMMENT

PICTURE THE SCENE. It's 6.30 on a Monday morning, gale force winds are blowing in wave after wave of horizontal rain, whatever direction I look the sky is an angry shade of dark grey and I'm gripping onto the edge of an already buckled gazebo, trying to stop it joining the other tents blowing across the campsite. There's rain running down the sleeve of my big Fox waterproof and, just to top it all, I'm wearing flip-flops! At this precise point I'd gladly exchange various bits of my anatomy (well I could spare one of them) for a warm bed but I'm in a field in Somerset and my mega-tog duvet is a long, long way away!

Billed as the biggest music festival in the world, a staggering 177,500 people rocked up at this year's Glastonbury. And apart from a few fairly fleeting breaks in the downpour it basically didn't stop raining from the moment I arrived on the Thursday night to the moment I climbed into my new bestest, bestest buddies' warm and dry Beemer around lunchtime the following Monday. And do you know what? I loved damn near every moment of it!

The festival-hardened crowd I'd gone with were almost apologetic. "It's the worse we've ever seen it!" "You'll have to come again next year!" "Don't let it put you off!" "Why are you grinning?" "How much cider have you had?" Believe it or not, I wasn't grinning because my cider visor was up and running (although by this point it was fully functional), I was grinning because compared with, say, the Foxhill des Nations in '98, the Foxhill GP in Y2K and last year's MXdN at Matterley Basin it was a piece of cake.

Okay, so the Glastonbury site is much larger than either Matterley or Foxhill but just say it's four times the size and you've got four times the number of people, then scale it down and proportionally everything's about equal. So why can Glastonbury operate fine and dandy thank you very much when events at Foxhill and Matterley slid into anarchy?

There are lots of reasons – plenty of security, a bloody great wall around the site, loads of bins, thousands of toilets, miles of interlinked metal sheets through the campsites – but almost everything boils down to one thing. Experience*. I'm sure the driving force behind staging something like Glastonbury is the same sort of passion that makes people want to stage big MX events but as well as this passion they've also got experience drawn from the last 30-odd years to fall back on.

This year we've got two 'British' GPs to look forward to – one at a new track at Donington Park and the other at a new track at Moneyglass Demesne in Northern Ireland. I'm not for one moment doubting the experience of the promoters behind these events but if we're to learn from past mistakes and grow these events for the future then we need some continuity rather than bouncing around the countryside from venue to venue.

Sean

* Actually, there is another factor in all of this and that's the mentality of the paying public. It seems we can't stage a major MX event in this country without the riot police paying it a visit but throughout the whole weekend at Glastonbury I saw no trouble at all. I did see some revellers in some incredible states but I didn't witness any drunken fights or burning bins, no-one pushed over any porta-poopers and there was even a well-observed policy of using the toilets instead of the hedgerows.

I guess that's hippies for you...they've got the hair but don't know how to let it down!



Tommy Searle will be flying the flag at Budd's Creek

BANANAS!

Just like buses and curved yellow fruit, GP and MXdN news comes in bunches...

BRITISH GP AND MXdN TEAM NEWS IS, it appears, like bananas and buses – you get nowt for ages and then all at once...

The silence from the team behind the GP at Donington Park on August 25/26 has been deafening – leading to internet speculation that the biggest event on English soil in 2007 was heading for a big, fat DNS.

But the good news that the keyboard warriors have got it wrong and 60,000 tons of dirt have now been delivered to the infield at the famous Leicestershire road race venue. And although a track plan isn't available yet we also have it on pretty good authority that the GP circuit will feature a Glen Helen-style banked first turn.

Advanced tickets are available now by hooking up to www.donington-park.co.uk or by calling 08700 429669.

Around this time of year the rumour mill starts to get up to speed regarding Team GB's MXdN squad and this time around speculation has been spiced up no end by the news that manager Rob

Herring has stepped down from the hot seat. In his place the ACU have created a MXdN management team with Mark Eastwood taking care of rider co-ordination and preparation.

As things currently stand the team will be Tommy Searle, Billy MacKenzie and James Noble with Brad Anderson as reserve for the event at Budd's Creek on September 22/23 but Easty's quick to point out that this is not carved in stone. "September's a long way away," says Mark who represented his country at the MXdN in 1997. "It's early days and I'm not going to say I'm not going to change it."

Getting riders racing the bikes they've been on all year is, for Mark, key to the team's chances of success – that plus a bit of good old fashioned motivation. "Hopefully I can bring a bit more team spirit into it although with the riders we've got this year it's not going to be a problem," reckons Easty.

"And it's the Nations so anything can happen – there will be some strong teams but if we believe in ourselves we can definitely run podium."

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CRAIC RIGHT ON!

New Irish GP venue gets thumbs-up

AUGUST PROMISES to be an awesome month for GP motocross with the Belgian, Irish and British rounds at Namur, Moneyglass Demesne and Donington Park all happening within a four-week period of what's annually Northern Europe's sunniest period.

While Namur's already a classic stop on the GP tour both the British – which you can read about elsewhere in this issue – and Irish races are to be held on brand-new courses specially built for world championship motocross.

The 1700-metre long track at Moneyglass Demesne for round 13 of the championship on August 18/19 is situated in a natural amphitheatre that offers spectators spectacular views of all the action and Youthstream track manager Greg Atkins is suitably impressed.

"Moneyglass Demesne is a great venue for the motocross world championship and the MXDN in 2008," reckons Greg. "I'm delighted with the work

that has gone into bringing the track together – its current lay-out ensures top class racing."

And Jasper Perry – acting chief of the Northern Ireland Events company – is equally excited about both the new facility and the upcoming race in August.

"Moneyglass Demesne offers facilities that nowhere else in Northern Ireland can provide. It's situated close to major transport links, hotels and other accommodation while the site offers an unparalleled amount of land and access available for organisers, spectators and campers."

With ticket prices being very reasonably priced at just £30 for a weekend pass – or £20 for a single day – with accompanied under 14s permitted free entry it's hoped the biggest GP crowd yet will descend on the facility that's just 25 miles from Belfast city centre.

For more information on the race or to buy tickets log on to www.nievents.co.uk

PLEASE SIR! Learn from Lampkin

A TOTAL sell-out for the last eight years, Dougie Lampkin's trials schools are the hot ticket for the feet-up brigade. This year's series of four schools are running from August 7-10 and, as always, the advice is book now or be disappointed.

Being held at a venue to be confirmed somewhere in the world epicentre of trials (that'll be Silsden then), the schools will also be graced by members of Dougie's WTC team with Euro champ James Dabill lending a hand with the tuition.

A maximum of 20 riders will be accepted each day. Pupils will split into smaller groups depending on ability with a structured programme to ensure everyone gets the most from their minimum of four hours on-the-bike training. On top of riding technique, bike prep and physical training feature on the curriculum along with a spot of competition strategy so you can psyche-out the opposition.

Each day will be a separate school, although pupils have the option of booking the following day if they wish to return to learn more advanced skills (strictly limited to a maximum of two days per rider).

Cost is a bargain £149.95 per rider per day which also covers insurance and a souvenir award. All major credit cards are accepted and cheques should be made payable to G2F.

To book your place hook up – right now – to www.g2fshop.com



RC IN GB?

Too good to be true rumour is, er, too good to be true

'I HEARD a rumour, hoo hoo, heard a rumour...' sang Bananarama in their 'classic' '80s hit and without doubt the hottest rumour doing the rounds at the moment is that none other than Ricky Carmichael will race the Irish and British GPs.

Sounds too good to be true and – sadly – that's exactly what it is! A quick phone call to our US guy Steve 'Nosferatu' Cox was all it took to get him on the case and after a quick flurry of emails Cali-based Cox had it straight from top Fox guy and RC buddy Scott Taylor that the GOAT was not planning on getting his ass kicked by Josh and the gang. Shame...

WIN! WIN! WIN!

Great Yorkshire Bike Show tickets

THE PURPLE Helmets, men in lycra, a wheelying fire engine, Titan – RobotX, hot girls in lycra and the backflipping UKFMX team are just some of the great attractions you can see if you visit this year's Great Yorkshire Bike Show at Cullingworth Showground – situated next to the A650 between Skipton and Bradford on July 28/29.

The quite frankly chuffing spectacular show that's promoted by Yaarkshire trials legends Dan Clark and Martin Crosswaite celebrates its third birthday this year and promises to be the most exciting thing the Bradford and Skipton areas have seen since records began back in the middle of the 11th Century.

Tickets are only available on the gate and cost a bargainous £10 for adults with cunning concessions for nippers and old folk – check www.thegreatyorkshirebikesshow.co.uk for details of those. But if you're still too tight to dip yer hand in yer pocket (a local maybe?) to see all the amazing attractions listed above plus trade stands, manufacturer displays and the opportunity to look at more bikes than you can shake a sheep at then we've got some great news for you...

Yes that's right Ebenezer, we're offering you the chance to win one of five pairs of tickets for the Great Yorkshire Bike Show for free. All you have to do is answer this oh-so tough teaser...

In which county is the Great Yorkshire Bike Show annually held?

- Is it:
- A) Yorkshire
 - B) Lancashire
 - C) Cumbria, eh
 - D) Nottinghamshire

When you think you know the answer either go to www.dirtbikerider.com and follow the competition link or write it down on the back of a postcard or pretty photograph – along with your name, address and a daytime telephone number – and send it to us at GYBS Show Comp, DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe LA4 4AG.

The first five randomly picked winners drawn after the closing date of July 25 will win a pair of tickets each.



Clarky and Crosser – two blue peas in a pod!

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On the cover: He lost his MX2 crown in '06 but Tony Cairoli's odds-on to get it back (rayarcher.com)
Contents: Tamsin Jones is the undisputed heroine of this year's Romaniacs painathon (Sutty)

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WIN! WIN! WIN!

Titanium Two Brothers four-stroke exhaust system

While it might possibly be true that loud pipes save lives To which American SX superstar did Two Brothers they don't much help when it comes to keeping hold of present a blinging gold KLX110 minibike?

With excessive noise being our sport's #1 enemy – along with tree huggers and manatees – now is the time to take positive steps to keep your four-popper's pipe quiet like a sleeping tiger.

And this is where **American** tuning wizards **Two Brothers** come in with their sweet as cherry pie titanium exhaust systems. **Two Brothers** pipes are not only quiet – they come complete with both 93 and 96db-rated easily interchangeable end caps – but they're also engineered in a way that keeps them pumping out your motor's ponies like some kind of supercharged stud farm.

Because we're an understanding bunch here at **DBR** and we realise how important it is to quietly pump out ponies we've hooked up with the lovely-locked guys at mbp-powersports.com to give each and every one of our lucky readers the chance to win a **titanium Two Brothers exhaust system** – worth a whopping £450 – of their own.

All you've got to do to be in with a shot of winning one of these exquisite pipes is head online to www.dirtbikerider.com and answer a very simple question – or if you're a technophobe we'll also accept answers sent by snail mail.

- Was it:
- James Stewart
 - James Hunt
 - James and the Giant Peach
 - Sid James

When you think you know the answer log on to the rather splendid www.dirtbikerider.com and follow the competition link to answer it there. Or you can send it to us here (along with your name, address, a daytime telephone number and the make, year and model of the bike you'd like the pipe for) – **MBP Powersports competition, DBR Magazine, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancashire LA4 4AG.**

The first correct entry picked entirely at random after the closing date of **August 9** will win a **Two Brothers pipe** all of their very own for choice. Yaay!



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Two-smoke ironman
David Willet

DEP UPDATE

Willet and Eastwood smoke smoker series

Words by Pondo Photo by Robert Austin

DESPITE THE domination of thumpers at British championship and GP level, two-smokers are not dead – and if you don't believe us just check out the fast-growing DEP Two-Stroke Challenge.

Originally aimed purely at 125cc pilots, the addition of an Open class has seriously upped the series' stakes and attracted even more top talent.

In the 125s David Willet has been the man so far, taking the overall at four out of five meetings – the exception being Landrake where Jason Dougan turned up to play and won comfortably. Stuart Edmonds holds a strong second ahead of a ferocious battle for third with Matt Ridgeway, Jim Davies, Nicky Watts and Steve Bixby all in the mix along with series latecomer Jonathan Pettitt who's knocking on the door to join in.

The Open Expert class has been all about Mark Eastwood. The former factory Honda rider has lost only two motos, one of which was arguably the race of the season so far at Landrake.

Easty got a great start and was leading on lap one but Jake Nicholls made a quick pass for the lead through the whoops. Eastwood settled on his tail but a small spill cost him valuable seconds. The response was electrifying and the ex-GP star pulled the pin to track Nicholls down – if the EU legislates against abuse of berms Easty will have to look out... But as the clock ticked, Eastwood's Honda bit back, spitting him off spectacularly and sealing the win for the Reverend.

The only man to regularly show glimpses of a similar pace to Eastwood has been David Willet – the ironman of two-stroke racing has competed in every Expert race this year and is approaching the sort of form that could challenge Eastwood for outright wins.

Behind the Honda pairing, Ryan Voase, reigning champion Ben 'Weaver' Taylor, Chad Yarranton, Stuart Flockhart, Andre David and James Lassu are all battling hard and capable of nicking third.

GORDON CROCKARD

TRAVELLING MAN!

FRANCE, BULGARIA, SWEDEN, WHITBY – THE CROCK STAR HAS CERTAINLY BEEN PUTTING IT ABOUT A BIT...

WORDS BY GORDON CROCKARD

SO IT'S my turn again to report any shocking news or stories from my latest month of racing bikes. Since my chain-breaking day at Langrish I've driven to the French GP, caught a flight to Bulgaria, driven home to Desertmartin and caught another flight to Sweden.

Today I'm tired of travelling but hoping I'll get over that mood quickly as I've got racing and travelling to continue with for some period yet. I would be interested to know how many miles I cover in a year as it seems most of my time is spent transporting myself from one place to another. Whether it be a 10-mile run, a 50-mile bicycle ride, a 40-minute GP race, a 500-mile camper drive, an afternoon doing motos at the practice track or a long-haul flight – it all adds up.

At the end of all these miles I ask myself where am I going or even where am I trying to get to. When will it stop? Steve McQueen once said something along the lines of 'life is a race, everything else is just waiting'. My reason for the miles I cover is simple – I'm trying to get to the chequered flag before everyone else! So given the current content of my life I'd say it's definitely a race. For others that I know and have seen it most definitely is NOT a race.

I don't think there's a right or wrong on this topic as everyone in life is dealt a different hand and also at any stage anyone's circumstances can change, especially in a sport like MX where injury is a big possibility. Just ask my fellow DBR columnist Swordy. Good to see you back on track Haggis!

I've had frustration overload at last month's races with qualifying being a major factor in how your starts end up. I've been okay with my riding but not okay with my results. In France the times were close – you'd think being 1.8 seconds off pole would leave me higher than 19th in qualifying. And tempers were fraying I'm sure among the Youthstream top brass on Sunday morning after some troublesome fans took it upon themselves to spray graffiti all over the startgate and startline backdrop. The club repainted the gate during morning warm-up but the sponsors' backdrop was unrepairable.

France was hot and Bulgaria was even hotter which I guessed would be the case. Last year for Bulgaria I packed riding kit and goggles suitable for hot weather and, yes, it was mega hot but then all of a sudden it went completely the other way and a huge thunderstorm broke out. I'll never forget sitting on the startline freezing and soaking with dark lens goggles and tear-offs. Paddy Irishman, eh?

This year I was better prepared for the weather but not for the behaviour of some of the Bulgarian people who tried to get as much money out of my pocket as possible! From the moment I arrived to the moment I left I was constantly trying to avoid getting ripped off. Taxi

guys are the worst and some of the waiters in restaurants are like magicians, making your change disappear and then losing the ability to speak English when challenged. On the first night I got there I stayed in a hotel arranged through the Youthstream website. My flight was in late so it was close to the airport and after paying four times the regular taxi fare I wasn't too impressed to be greeted by a sign at the hotel saying 'NO GUNS'. Definitely the dirtiest, oldest, badly maintained, hellhole of a hotel I've ever seen, never mind paid money to stay in. Good job we were only there for one night.

The races in Bulgaria were all about where you started and where you started was all about where you qualified. I left the GP pretty frustrated with where I finished. I flew back on the Monday to Luton and got a taxi to Mark Bishop's KTM race team workshop which is where I'd parked my camper. After catching up on the craic we hit the motorway and headed for Stranraer in Scotland to catch the P+O ferry home to Belfast. There had been some serious flooding at home but the Desertmartin club had handled it very well and the track and venue were prepared to the highest standard.

My mechanic Factory Phil had made the massive drive from Bulgaria in one piece but there was a worrying noise coming from the engine of my Sprinter. After Desertmartin my van was heading straight to Sweden so some urgent repairs were needed and with the help of a friend the van was repaired, serviced and in top shape again.

I wanted to win at Desertmartin and had the pace but it was tough to pass Brad Anderson in the first moto when the track was still quite smooth and back-markers seem to get in my way all the time too. In the second race I collided with someone on the start straight and was lucky not to go down but by the time I'd passed the pack Big Ken was long gone. Second overall was okay but I wanted to win!

In Sweden I had a tough time protecting my damaged knee on the rutted track. Some tracks are no problem and I can ride without caring for my knee but others are really tough. I'm having surgery on it at the end of the year and I look forward to getting rid of the daily pain I experience at the moment. Sweden's also suffering with strange summer wet weather too and this made it all very muddy on the Saturday. It was much drier on the Sunday but the ruts were formed already and I didn't really enjoy it at all – 16th and 12th were my results but I'd hoped and planned for much better than that.

Whitby's next for a British championship round this weekend and looking out the window now I'm guessing it's going to be a wet one! Where has the summer gone?



The Big X team enjoy a photo opportunity with the Lawless cardboard cut-out



The Big X track is a sweet little circuit



Sutty lets rip on one of the Big X Aprilias



The 230 CCMs are ideal to learn on

X HITS THE SPOT!

Dirt bike project wins hearts and minds

THESE ARE tough times for dirtbike fans with the green police breathing down our necks, places to legitimately ride becoming increasingly rare and noise issues threatening what facilities we still have.

But maybe, just maybe, help is at hand in the shape of a knight in shining (body) armour who's winning hearts and minds with a ground-breaking scheme that's taking all things dirt to the heart of the community.

Tony Bayman, who runs the Cheshire-based Big X project, is using dirtbikes to help teenagers who are for want of a better word 'wayward'. And it's not just these kids who are benefiting from the chance to learn to ride and maintain a fleet of machines ranging from buggies and pit bikes through to Aprilia V-twin MXers. Mainstream high school pupils are regulars at Big X's facility just outside Chester and anyone from teenagers upwards are welcome.

And, what's more, not only do they get to ride and wrench the bikes, they can also get nationally recognised qualifications.

Tony first got involved five years ago when Bob Barton from Cheshire Youth Service asked him to attend a meeting aimed at getting a youth motorcycle project called Kick Start off the ground.

After lots of hot air and very little action Tony and Bob decided to set up their own scheme and Big X was born.

"When I started I said I wouldn't stand in a field and have young people riding old bikes," explains Tony, "and that's very much the case today."

And he's not kidding! Among other bits of machinery Big X has a fleet of 450 and 550cc Aprilia V-twins plus immaculately-prepped 230 CCMs perfect for learning the basics on. Then there's a sweet little motocross track, a 5km enduro loop plus a planned minibike circuit and a cyber café on the way.

"It's amazing just how much benefit young people gain from coming here. Many of them are so used to being told that they'll never amount to anything so when you prove to them that they can do something you can see their confidence growing.

"I have developed courses with specific goals – education is my aim both in life skills and helping young people realise they can do so much more. It's not always easy but by hell it's rewarding.

"We have support from Aprilia, Michelin, CCM and Halfords. Carl Fogarty came to see us one day and the High Sheriff of Cheshire's also visited and then sent me a letter commenting on the

difference my work makes to these young people."

So what of the future for Tony and Big X? Onwards and upwards seems to sum it up nicely. "I am proud of what I have done to date and I hope within the next few years to develop 12 more similar facilities around the UK," says Tony. "We have our own club, a place where parents can bring their kids to ride and in some cases ride with them.

"And we have bikes to hire out, we run classes with a number of high schools and special needs schools and I am also looking at Australia after a chap from Down Under came to see us and is now keen to develop something similar over there.

"If it wasn't for the support of landowners all off-road activities would suffer and in my case the work I do couldn't happen if not for people like Stuart and Alison Arden who have made such an impact on seeing my programme develop.

"And we should all recognise noise issues. The bottom line is no land, no riding and when noise issues arise even with educational facilities like ours we have to employ advisors and noise specialists just so we can say to any young person, 'yes you can ride today'."

For more info – and the chance to win a minibike – hook up to www.bigx.co.uk



As a rider Chris was fast and fair

FIGHTING SPIRIT!

Irish racer amazes doctors

Words and photos by Raymond McCosh

AS ANYONE who races motocross knows the sport can deal a cruel hand as far as injuries are concerned – and on Easter Monday this was brought brutally home to 24-year-old Northern Irish racer Chris Esler.

After hitting a deep rut Chris was thrown over the bars and sustained a serious spinal injury that's left him paralyzed from the neck down.

Chris, who's been riding bikes since he was a toddler, knows he's got a long, hard fight ahead of him. But the qualities that earned him the reputation as a fighter on the track are standing him in good stead and he's amazed everyone – doctors, family and friends – with his awesome courage and spirit.

While in hospital Chris, whose love of motocross remains undiminished, has had to fight off a few infections but is progressing really well – recent blood tests and x-rays have come back all clear and with the help of some physio he is now strong enough to take off the neck support collar. Hopefully, by the time you're reading this, the feeding tube will be removed as well.

Chris' girlfriend Melissa and his friends and family are constantly by his side and a number of fund-raising events have already been held but this is only the start. Next up is an auction and raffle with, hopefully, a 250F up for grabs and anyone who'd like to help out in any way should call Roy on 07860 938113 or contact me on 07786 545080 or by email at rammiemccod@hotmail.com

Chris has amazed everyone with his courage



GOOD TO BE BACK!

IN MAY 2006 SWORDY BADLY BUST HIS FOOT AND ANKLE AT THE GERMAN GP – ALMOST 14 MONTHS LATER HE'S FINALLY BACK BEHIND A STARTGATE

WORDS BY STEPHEN SWORD PHOTO BY STILL-MX.CO.UK

AFTER ALMOST 14 months on the sidelines June saw my return to racing and I have to say it feels like years since I've been out! The British Masters championship was being held at Hawkstone Park so I decided it would be as good a place as any to start. So I arrived on the Saturday afternoon and was greeted by the biggest downpour of rain we've probably had all year. I couldn't get out of the van for an hour and was thinking to myself, 'yep, this is definitely motocross, welcome back Steve'!

For Sunday the weather was dry but the damage to the track had already been done. They did all they could to scrape off as much mud as possible but conditions were very heavy. I struggled a bit with the ruts and mud but enjoyed being back. The first race I was about fourth out of the gate which I was pretty happy with but I didn't find my rhythm, crashed on the last lap and ended up sixth.

The second started better when I took the holeshot – that felt nice and it was good to know my reactions are still there after all this time. Anderson and Gregory passed me after a few laps but I was holding a good third for most of the race until I ran into the back of a fallen rider in the bombhole after the marshal didn't get his flag out in time. I couldn't get out as my back wheel was sinking deeper into the sand – it was like being at Weston! I eventually got going and was coming through the field good but took another crash on the last lap. But the good thing about the day was that I finished both races no problem and my ankle didn't hamper me in any way.

I spent the Monday blocking up the washing machine with sand much to Jodie's delight and for the rest of the week I worked hard and focused on my first British championship race in over a year at Desertmartin. I was looking forward to the day and enjoying being part of the team instead of just watching from the sidelines.

And I was satisfied with the way things went. I suffered from arm-pump in qualifying and the first race which made me ride a bit tight but in the second I was more consistent and felt more at one with the bike. My goal at the start of the day was to not crash, improve as the day went on, concentrate only on myself and finish in the top 10 both times out. I ended up with a ninth and 10th place and didn't crash which is a pretty good starting point for me to build on. And it was nice to pick up a bit of prize money at the end of the day!

After Ireland it wasn't in my plans to race the Swedish GP the following week but we thought going to Sweden would be good for me as I need to get some races under my belt. Racing is so different from practising – I need to feel all those nerves and be in races to learn plus I've had enough time sat at home, I just want to get on with it now.

Again track conditions on Saturday were not so good after all the rain on Friday night. I used both practice sessions to warm up and get rid of my arm-pump without worrying about my times. I felt good about the qualifying race and as always the start was going to be important – the first turn was very muddy and I knew I had to get round in the first five. With a good jump from the middle I went

into the turn about fourth – great! Then someone clipped my front wheel on the exit and I went down. I was stuck in the mud and under the bike and by the time I got up it was game over for me!

So I ended up in the LCQ but could only manage eighth with just six to go through. I was disappointed to say the least! Finishing eighth in the last chance means you are second reserve so I had to do practice on Sunday morning with the hope of maybe getting a ride in one of the races. As it happened I didn't get a start and didn't enjoy watching one little bit. But I did learn a lot and it was a handy way of getting back into the schedule of GPs.

This week I have a lot to work on ready for the Whitby British championship round – I'll be hard on myself and will be working hard with DT.

Finally for this month I'd like to clear something up which I find funny more than anything but I guess could potentially be quite serious. If any of you reading this are into MySpace on the internet and have been chatting to me on there then you have been fooled. It's not me, in fact I don't even have a MySpace account – but someone out there is pretending to be me. I can just about send an email [I'll vouch for the 'just about' bit – SL] never mind set up my own pages so be warned, there's a counterfeit Swordy surfing the net!

Okay, that's it for another month – take care and I'll see you at the races...



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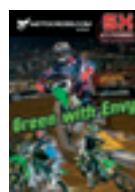
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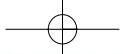
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Sweden - home of tasty smorgasbords, spectacular fjords, '70s skin flicks, Abba, Bjorn Borg, fierce Vikings, a city called Stockholm and the awesome Uddevalla GP track - has a new claim to fame as the country where CAS Honda's super-sized Belgian Ken De Dycker claimed his maiden GP victory.

Caught here on camera taking a nifty inside line in proper speedway-stylee, Big Ken finally put the #9 CRF450 on the top of the box and in the process put a big smile on team owner Harry Ainsworth's chops!

Top work lofty frites-eating fella...

Photo Magnus Andersson



Next Issue On Sale August 10

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A collage of motocross rider photos. On the left, a rider in red, blue, and yellow gear is shown from the side, wearing a helmet with 'HONDA' and 'SHOEI' logos. A black number plate on the bike displays the number '50'. The background shows a blurred track. On the right, another rider in red and blue gear is shown from behind, leaning into a turn. A large, stylized letter 'E' composed of blue and yellow triangles is overlaid across the center of the image.

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BLARNEY?

WORDS BY STEVIE MILLS PHOTO BY STILL-MX.CO.UK

MYSTIC MEG?

MORE LIKE MYSTIC MILLS - AND OUR MAN IN IRELAND IS RIDING HIGH THIS MONTH AFTER TIPPING MARTY BARR FOR A TOP RESULT AT DESERTMARTIN

'EXPECT TO see Martin Barr put in his best performance to date at Desertmartin.' Oh, what words of wisdom I uttered last month! Yep, following my predictions in last month's Blarney the boy only goes and puts his Bike-it Dixon Racing Yamaha in pole position!

I can honestly say that the first MX2 moto at the British championship round at Porters Pit nearly brought tears of joy to my eyes. The partisan crowd went crazy, the single most exciting race we have had the pleasure of witnessing for quite a while. Podium GP regulars Searle and Swanepoel had no answer to Barr until the Larne man slid off, remounted and stormed back to a personal best second place. Ace!

Sadly mechanical issues second time out robbed Martin of at least a podium result in front of his growing army of home fans. But he still did them all proud...

GC was on form and 3-2 on the day kept his championship hopes alive. Gordon's second race was especially impressive coming off a ninth-place start following a near fatal collision with James Noble at the end of the start straight.

Wayne Garrett rode his Moto-One KTM to points in both MX2 races while young Luke Wilde scored 18th position in his very first British championship event. Sixth overall went to Wulfsport rider Shaun Simpson while team-mate Drew Goudy collected 25th for his efforts.

In the MX1 class Tommy Merton placed the Rainey Bro's Honda in the points in both races while Mike Sinton and Phil McLaughlin narrowly missed out on point-scoring finishes.

On the domestic championship front the Ulster Premier series is gathering momentum. Coming into the second half of the season it's Wayne Garrett who is the man on form with Tommy Merton trying hard to re-ignite his blistering early season race speed. Third and ready to pick up the challenge if the leading pair make a mistake is GOMX/Russell's rider Mike Sinton.

In the MX2 Ulster series Wayne is heading the points table from his new team-mate Graeme Irwin with that 'Wilde Boy' the only other rider to win a moto so far.

Rain stopped play at round four of the Irish national championship scheduled for Seaford but a new date in late August will keep the six-round series on track. With five moto wins under his belt Wayne Garrett is starting to look like the champion elect although Tommy Merton is within one race of being back in contention. Merton's DNF at Dundalk handed his fellow Comber rider a cushion at the head of the championship table.

Southern Centre champ Brian O'Connell is having a fine start to his season and is running third after some strong rides. Brian has rekindled his passion for the sport, coming into this season with a level of fitness and determination not seen since 2005. A podium finish in the Irish national championship would be a just reward for such effort.

Gary Gibson aboard his Holeshot Motocross-supported Honda has

been another surprise this year. Gary took a big off at the recent mid-week motocross run by the Temple Club at Leitrim. First reports are that Gary sustained rib damage – let's hope he is back on form for the new round four scheduled for Tandragee (if this rain ever quits)!

Flying 15-year-old Graeme Irwin leads the Moto-One challenge from Garrett in the MX2 series following Wayne's DNF. Luke Wilde is the man to split the Moto-One boys, the Donegal rider won his first Ulster MX2 race recently, passing Irwin and Garrett in the process. Third in the points table at present, Luke has the speed to win races and if consistent could be a late challenger for top honours in this class.



MARTIN BARR TAKES A CAREER-BEST SECOND IN THE OPENING MAXXIS MX2 MOTO

Well done Jimmy McFerran. The Castlewellan man continues to make big waves in the British mini bike champs. James rode to three straight wins at round two of the series aboard a Monstermoto Mk1.

Moneyglass Demesne is the venue for the GP of Northern Ireland which will take place on August 26. Home advantage will be limited to crowd support as no-one will have ever ridden this circuit before as it's being built especially for the GP and des Nations. I hope by this date the summer will have arrived as it's based on a hardpack surface with many jumps and spectacular viewing vantage points.

Most of our domestic series riders will face a tough task to qualify although I am sure a few brave hearts will give it a go. Let's hope the sun is out and the crowds flock to see the greatest sport in the world!

See you at the races...

Stevie
dirtbikerider 19

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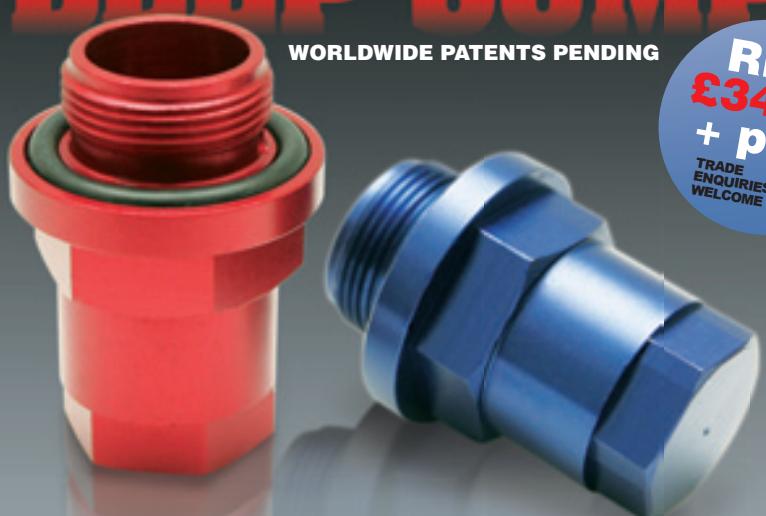
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WORDS AND PHOTO BY JONTY EDMUNDS

TURNING POINT!

FROM A LESS THAN IDEAL START TO HIS FIRST US GNCC SERIES KNIGHTER HAS WELL AND TRULY PUT HIMSELF BACK IN THE CHAMPIONSHIP DRIVING SEAT

IT KIND of goes without saying that there's nothing more important to a professional motorcycle racer than winning races. A rider can be the fastest, the most naturally gifted or the fittest there is but if he or she isn't winning races then there's only so far up the 'professional' ladder they'll climb. After all, winning races is directly linked to winning championships. Always has been, always will be...

Of course, some races are more important than others. The opening round of any championship is always a hugely important race – one in which a podium topping result not only boosts confidence but demoralises opponents as well. And winning in front of a home crowd can be equally uplifting while beating a rival at their home GP can deliver an important psychological blow.

Arguably even more important than simply winning a race is the way in which a rider goes about it. While finishing first will always ensure maximum points the way in which a race is won can speak volumes about both a rider and a possible championship outcome.

Winning races is something that David Knight has got used to during the last few years. And having completed the whole '06 WEC season undefeated en route to his second Enduro 3 world championship he knows pretty much all there is to know about stamping his mark on a series.

Winning pretty much all there was to win in '06 having lead the E3 world championship from start to finish, Knighter found himself in an altogether different situation at the beginning of the '07 US Grand National Cross Country Championship.

Injured, competing in a new series aboard new and largely untested machinery and with one hell of a reputation to live up to, DK mixed good results with not-so-good results as he adjusted to life Stateside.

Steadily and surely though Knight has got his championship aspirations back on track during the past four months. Switching back to a thumper, winning some races and almost winning some other races, David had opened up a slender championship lead shortly after the midway point of the season.

Round eight of the US GNCC series is a key race as far as the championship is concerned. The last event before a two-month summer break, it's one of those races that every rider wants to win. For Knighter it was a race he needed to win every bit as much as he wanted to win it. With several small mechanical problems having robbed him of valuable championship points in events leading up to the Snow Shoe GNCC he needed every point on offer.

David, as many predicted he would, finished first and collected the much needed points on offer but he did much, much more than simply win the race. Finishing close to 10 minutes ahead of his nearest rival to claim what many believe to be the biggest ever winning margin in the US GNCC series, Knighter's victory came at a massively important point in the championship.

In one 40-metre uphill section of the course David destroyed his competition lap after lap. With the challenging slope littered with rocks, ruts, tree roots and lapped riders

Knighter's desire to win not only the race but more importantly the '07 GNCC championship was crystal clear. Knowing that the conditions would allow him to use all of his skills, David thrived while many of his rivals made themselves look like amateurs. So much so that on that one climb alone Knight pulled two-and-a-half minutes on his closest championship rival Charlie Mullins. It was a massively impressive performance that spoke volumes about David's will to win.

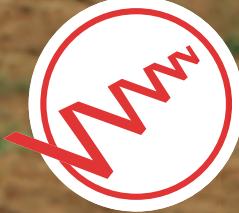
But in dominating the race while many of his rivals struggled David also proved one other thing – that he was bang on the money when he singled out his rivals' weaknesses as being their inability to deal with tough and technical going. With his comments immediately hitting a nerve with several of his championship rivals, David simply let his riding do the talking and showed that he wasn't being cocky or big-headed, instead he proved he knew exactly what his rivals' weaknesses were.

As far as the '07 GNCC series goes the Snow Shoe GNCC was – and likely will be – the most important race of the year for Knighter. He's certainly not home and dry as far as the championship is concerned but now with a solid lead DK, for the first time this year, holds a firm upper hand – both in the points standings and in terms of his confidence.

With five races remaining – none of them likely to be as technically challenging as the Snow Shoe – much of the damage Knighter needed to do is now done. With his championship rivals forced to spend two months licking their wounds Knighter's devastating mid-season blow will hopefully now lead to his first US GNCC title.



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MUMMY KNOWS BEST!

I am just writing to say what a great magazine DBR is. I am a mum of a motocross mad 9-year-old so when the new DBR comes into our house there is fierce competition between my son, husband and now myself for first read.

I have to say the articles by Neil Drew on sports psychology have to be the best you have ever published. I can't agree more with the sentiments he expressed about parents in last month's issue. Providing a steady flow of truthful praise is essential if you want your child to succeed in motocross or anything else in life for that matter.

For most young people, confidence is fragile and wavers depending on the feedback they get. We need to respect this and find ways to boost it if we want safe, happy and resilient young competitors. This is a subject I would love to see DBR continue in the future.

Elaine, Jersey

TRANSATLANTIC TRAVELLER!

I am a 17-year-old motocross racer and fan from Wiltshire and I have a query that I would love you to help me with. Me and a friend are looking to go to the MX des Nations this year in America. We want to find somewhere that does an all-inclusive trip other than MX Heaven.

I am just wondering if you would have any idea where I could find such a trip. By the way keep up the great work with the magazine – I buy every issue!

Jack, Wiltshire

As far as we can tell only MX Heaven are running an all-inclusive trip. However, Stephen Heighton's racesocal.com are also offering a similar style package that isn't all-inclusive but probably works out at around the same price when all is said and done.

DIRT BIKE BRIBERY!

If I send you a picture of my 19-year-old sister in the bath will you send me some DBR stickers for my bike?

Rob, Yorkshire

We think we may already have some of those in the office but if you send a SAE to the usual address we'll send you some stickers...



PLUCKY PAUL!

I was riding my bike on a private supercross track when the engine cut out while I was attempting a double jump. I landed head first and the bike hit me – typical! I came to and to my horror I was paralysed from the waist down and I couldn't breathe. I eventually managed to turn myself over and start breathing again. I knew I had to accept my situation.

Paramedics, police and family all arrived together to assist me and amazingly the feeling in my legs began to return. The relief was amazing as you can imagine. I was taken by air ambulance to the James Cook Hospital in Middlesborough where I was diagnosed with a burst fracture of the T12 vertebra and five broken ribs. The operation to plate and stabilise the injury was successful and left me still able to feel and move my legs with the predicted outcome of 100 per cent recovery.

I left hospital five days after the operation aided by crutches – apparently I was the one in a million who gets to walk after this. The doctor left me with a sobering thought. I had told him of all my protective gear that I was wearing at the time of the accident and he said that I owed my life to the neck protector and the quality of the helmet. Most people suffering similar injuries to my own aren't able to walk again due to not wearing neck protection.

All motocross riders wear helmets and most wear body armour but neck protection is overlooked. I feel that neck protection is just as vital a piece of safety equipment as a helmet or boots. It can save life or fend off a more serious injury as proven in my case.

I would like to thank my girlfriend, friends and family for their support through this difficult time and the Great North Air Ambulance and the doctors and nurses at the James Cook Hospital on wards 36 and 37 where I was treated. And not forgetting the EVS neck protector – worth its weight in gold – and my Arai helmet.

Paul, via email



GIRL POWER!

Well done for featuring top female racers in your magazine. I've really enjoyed reading about Livia Lancelot, Katherine Prumm and Natalie Kane in the last few issues now how about a feature on the top British girl riders?

I'd also like to know more about motocross mums, riders' girlfriends and the ladies who work behind the scenes.

Jackie, Northamptonshire

Sounds good to us mate – we'll look into it...

THE HONEYMOONERS!

I don't know if it's appropriate or not but my husband Justin – a DEP Open class championship rider – asked me to email you this picture taken at our wedding at Lake Bled in Slovenia. Shortly after this was taken we were taken around the lake in a horse drawn carriage before being boated across to an island for a blessing at the beautiful church of St Mary of the Assumption.

You may also remember that I entered the Face of DBR competition a couple of years ago – Justin's interested to know where I came.

Hannah, Worcestershire

Hi Hannah congratulations (or is that commiserations) on getting married to Justin – it sounds like you had a reet good do in Slovenia. If my memory serves me right you finished a close second in the Face of DBR competition behind the very beautiful Tiffnoire Leigh – I guess on that occasion you were the bridesmaid and not the bride!





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SINISALO

SCD RACEWEAR

I'm blue ba da bee ba da da sang crappy Euro popsters Eiffel 65 as they took the charts by storm in the summer of '99. And while they weren't singing about these very nice SCD pants, jersey and gloves from Sinisalo which are blue – and also available in the colour Gum – or even Sarah P who's not (except for the time when we locked her in the freezer – what a jolly jape that was!) they sure could have been... Sinisalo are one of the world's premier motocross and enduro clothing manufacturers and their top-of-the-line SCD range shows why as the pants, gloves and jersey are chock-full of Finnish design and build goodness that keep you comfy right to the chequered flag!

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RG3

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TM DESIGNWORKS

KTM CHAIN SLIDE AND GUIDE

Aside from being boiled in a big black pot by hungry cannibals there's not much worse in life than having to stop riding every so often to put your chain back on the sprockets because your flimsy-as-flan stock chain-guide just isn't doing its job. That's where this awesome TM Designworks part from Baseline could save your day and possibly your skin (if you were being hunted by hungry cannibals when your chain came off).

TM Designworks have been producing top quality chain slide and guide systems in the US for years and they're the preferred choice of top off-road stars including David Knight, Ken De Dycker and Geoff 'Rich-T' Walker. Due to their unique material and high quality manufacturing process TM Designworks' Slide and Guide system offers far less chain drag with much greater impact resistance than the stocker. For more information on how to save your day – and your life by not getting eaten by hungry cannibals – log on to off-road part portal www.baselinering.com today.

Price: £110

Supplier: baselinering.com

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Fresher than freshly squeezed OJ – that's the drink not the actor – and equally as brightly coloured is this 2008 No Fear Elektron kit that was secretly shipped to the DBR office on its way to Pioneer Yamaha's Brad Anderson.

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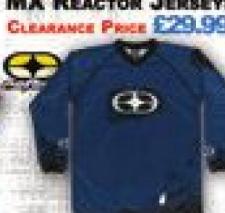
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profile

Twistin' 7! Richie Lawson gives it a big old handful at Hawkstone



MAGNIFICENT 7



They're defying the odds and are led by a shiny-headed hero but that's where the similarity between the Twisted 7 Kawasaki team and a bunch of cowboys fighting Mexican bandits ends...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by still-mx.co.uk



Bryan MacKenzie goes into orbit at Langrish



Perrett, Jeff

"I'VE GOT to be careful to keep the MacKenzies happy, I'm surrounded by them. I'm infested by MacKenzies!" Jeff Perrett contemplates what he's just said, leans back in his seat and has a little chuckle.

I've known the Twisted 7 Kawasaki team boss/owner/founder since the back end of the '90s and, through good times and bad, it's fair to say that most things that come out of his mouth are punctuated with a chuckle. And when the follicly-challenged 34-year-old's on a roll very little can stem the tide of nonsense...

"I've got a GP winner on my team and it's money well spent – I'm paying him an absolute bloody fortune! Ha ha!"

The GP winner in question is, of course, Billy MacKenzie who pits out of the Twisted 7 awning at British championship meetings alongside his cousin Bryan and Richard Lawson. Obviously, the fastest of the MacKenzie clan doesn't receive a penny in wages from Twisted 7 but as is so often the case with Jeff, a joke is used to set up a more serious point.

"It's been difficult – we're a ridiculously low-budget team and can't compete with the other guys at this stage but I've got some good backing," he admits. "We're sponsored by Animal – I've been with them for 11 years now, I think I'm their longest serving 'athlete'. Make sure you leave that in!"

The former DBR columnist was – actually, still is – mustard on a motocross bike with his highest British championship ranking of fifth coming after a stellar season in '98. He also regularly qualified for GPs which in a roundabout way is how the Twisted 7 name came about.

"Twisted 7 started in '05. The name actually comes from when Talavera used to be the opening GP of the year and we all used to travel out – me, Easty [Mark Eastwood], Scott [Eastwood], my brothers Percy and Shawn – and I'd always take a couple of mates and make stupid videos and stuff. And looking back I realised there were always seven of us.

"But that's not the full reason. I wanted a number involved because it's more distinctive and easier to market so that's where the '7' came from. And then I was driving along and the idea of 'Twisted' came into my head – I reckoned it would be funny to listen to the commentators saying 'and here comes Bryan MacKenzie riding a Twisted Kawasaki' which is pretty appropriate really because quite often he does – so we kinda put the two together."

Back in 2004, with his time in the domestic top-flight coming to a close, Jeff was seriously demotivated and having grown up racing motocross he knew he was staring down the barrel of a pretty major lifestyle change. But salvation was close at hand...

"I decided to stop riding but didn't know what I was going to do with my weekends. I still wanted to stay involved and I was testing some Kawasakis for DBR and was talking to Steve Guttridge. I was going to ride again because I didn't really know what else to do – I was writing the column in DBR and was worried it was going to be pretty lame if I wasn't going to a motocross event at all.

"Anyway, Steve offered me a ride and then we started talking and he said why don't you make a team? And then he suggested that he wanted to continue to work with certain riders and it was pretty much decided there and then in Germany I'd start a team and team up with Bryan MacKenzie.





Bry in broken wrist action at Lyng



Greg Fisher is Twisted 7's youth teamster taking on both the BYMX and MXY2 series

profile



Calcium Kid

Bry says...

"There's no emphasis on results – it's just go out, have a blast and make sure you're smiling when you get back. Results are nice and everyone wants them but with Jeff being an ex-rider he knows he doesn't need to put pressure on us. We're working on a small budget so I think we're doing a good job. The set-up's cool and our sponsors are cool – we've got a good image."



"I kinda knew Bry anyway. When I went back to the 125s my bike broke down at Donington so we asked for a part over the PA system. Before we knew it Bry not only offered the part, he was stripping my bike down between races so we kind of struck up a relationship from there really."

"From the start of '05 I knew I wasn't going to race in '06. I'd been watching Richie Lawson – I had a real good tear-up with him at the Isle of Wight where he really pushed me so I knew he was a trier – and I started talking to him and we got on really well. The team's just a group of lads, I don't tell them what to do as such and there's loads and loads of p**s-taking and laughing and I never put any pressure on them. I don't need to, you can tell how much they want it themselves. Bry is ridiculous – he's had 13 broken wrists already and he's only 22..."

Jeff the rider never picked up a major injury in a career that stretched all the way from the schoolboy ranks but Jeff the team manager is getting plenty of A&E action with Bry and Richie.

"They're such triers, Bry in particular – that kid deserves a break. Unfortunately every break he gets is a f*****g wrist! In fact I think that's how he funds his racing – he's got good insurance and he makes sure he breaks a wrist every year and it pays for his racing. He won't like me saying that because it might make people think he's a bad rider and he's not. He went down to Matchams for the four-strokes and set the quickest lap times in both races and he goes quick. He's a little like Herring was at first – blindingly quick but he crashed a lot. ▀



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*Old Man Lawson and
Bry's mechanic
Bryan Connolly*

Team Tiddler *Twisted 7's youth roots*

Twisted 7 Kawasaki also run schoolboy rider Greg Fisher. "He's a friend of Richie's family," explains Jeff. "I wanted a schoolboy rider, someone who would be well-presented, a steady rider who could improve. And they're a real nice family so I know I won't get any grief with them."



Legoman
Richie reckons...

"I love riding for the team, it's just a great atmosphere. We haven't got a big budget but the bikes are good and we look good on and off the track. The way Jeff goes about things means he puts no pressure on us – he knows that me and Bry put the pressure on ourselves. His background definitely helps – he knows what it's like and he knows what we need."



"He went off to Canada Heights, first meeting of the year and got a fifth. And he was riding with a broken wrist. He's rode the first three rounds of the British championship with a broken wrist. He crashed in the week before Canada Heights and he knew he'd broken it but he wouldn't admit to it. So he's just hovering outside the top 10 and that's with a broken wrist. And Richie dislocated his shoulder just before Canada Heights and he only came back at Landrake so we've not had a lot of luck."

Despite the early setbacks to the season, the fledgling Twisted 7 team is already looking to '08 and consolidating their presence in the paddock.

"We are – so I'm told – the official MX1 Kawasaki team for the British championships and I think they want to continue doing that. They really wanted Bry to try and win the British four-strokes but obviously his wrist operation got in the way and he's missed a couple of rounds.

"Next year I'm working on the idea that I'm not going to get any other riders in – I've pretty much built the team around those two. We could get another rider in but I kinda believe in

those two and I think with Bry and Rich we're capable of having two riders in the top 10. So the plan is to keep with them although, don't get me wrong, if Gordon Crockard comes along...

"I'd like to think Animal will do more next year and we're kinda tied in with Thor, DP, all the other sponsors but it's all product. I got a 10 grand loan to start the team which I'm in my final year of paying back. We're not a big budget team – I don't pay for entries or anything like that but I'd love to and that's where I want to get it to – people don't realise that Bry works during the week and so does Richie."

"It's a good laugh with those two. It's a great little team and that's the way I want to keep it. You should never say never but at the minute I've got no aspirations of going GP racing. But I do want to help them because I see where they are at and it feels like where I was at."

And if his riders are carrying injuries that keep them out of the specialist MX press headlines, Jeff's tie-in with Animal is giving Twisted 7 – and their other sponsors – the kind of mainstream exposure that even GP-winning teams can only dream of.



© Sutty

Banging bars...

...on a budget

Racing on a shoestring budget is great preparation for running a team on a shoestring budget – which means Jeff's an expert at making ends meet.

"When I was doing the GPs I was literally rushing back after the weekend so I could be at work on Monday morning and then hopefully get the Friday off so I could get to the next GP. I was never on a team that was funded. Vic Eastwood was probably the guy who helped me out the most and I travelled with Mark which helped save money but other than that I was paying for everything – all the entries, that kind of thing..."

"I was never on a paid ride and looking back I'm glad I wasn't. I think it would have taken the fun out of it for me. I always kinda realised I was never going to be a British champ or a world champ, I just wanted to enjoy the ride. My best year was '98 when I finished fifth – it should have been fourth but the bike seized up at the last race at Lyng."

"Probably the first and only time I've ever really lost my temper. It was the only DNF we had all year and I remember kinda doing a Johnny Wilkinson type thing on my Bell Moto and punting it down Cadgers Hill."



The set-up's pretty Pro
for a limited budget

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"The thing with Animal is that they use us on their point of sale stuff so you can go into an Animal store and you'll see a pic of Bry and Rich on the wall so all the other sponsors really benefit from it."

"And Animal have run adverts of us in FHM and stuff like that – you're not going to see, say, Ken De Dycker in FHM but the chances are you might see Bryan MacKenzie or Richie Lawson in FHM or GQ. So although we're not working on a huge budget we do get a lot of exposure."



Mac talk

Jeff on Billy...

"Billy's Billy, he says what he thinks. Putting the team together we had quite a few heated arguments over the phone because he wants it right and he's passionate. He doesn't hold back on anything. So I've had a few tear-ups with Billy but that's good, that's how he wants you to be. And he is bigger than me so I've got to be careful – and his dad's even bigger!"

"He hasn't got Twisted 7 graphics but he runs the logo on his kit for British rounds. And already we've discussed that if things go well and he stays with Kawasaki and stuff for next year we'll be looking at a bigger set-up and hopefully he'll stay. It would be pretty good to go into the New Year knowing you've got a British champion under your EZ-ups!"

"It's actually Billy probably more than anyone who instigated that. He knew he was signing for Jan and knew he wanted to stay racing the British so where was he going to go? So we sat down at the bike show and thrashed it out. I think Billy wanted to take a little bit of pressure off in his first year and it seems to be working out for him."

"My favourite riders are those riders who are a little bit different. Carmichael's one of my favourite riders but you know he's not going to say anything untoward. You've got riders like Brad [Anderson] who I think's great – he's a real shot in the arm for British motocross and Billy is as well. Billy's always said what he wants and, okay, he's dropped a few clangers but at least he's exciting. The sport definitely needs that – it's an exciting sport and you should have exciting characters."





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bike test

*Tony lets rip in Spain as
KTM win the race to
launch their '08 range*

SUNNY DELIGHTS!

**Tiny terror Tony Marshall checks out the full range
of super-sweet 2008 KTM's in searing Spain**

Words by Tony Marshall Photos by Redeye

IF THERE'S one thing KTM enjoy – even more than the colour orange – it's getting next year's race bikes ready to rip and out on showroom floors sometime before September. I mean, we're barely halfway through the 2007 racing season and here we are in sunny Spain testing the 2008 range of motocross models – madness!

And with 125, 144 and 250cc two-strokes to test as well as the all-conquering 250 and electric-start 450 four-stroke models to go at our tony test pilot Tiny Marshall is in for a busy couple of days...

For 2008 the SX range has come in for more of a tickle and tweak rather than an all-out revamp. And after a very successful 2007 – so far at least – who can blame KTM? Aside from the obligatory BNGs the only visible changes are a new bend of Renthal bar (996 no less), works style wraparound fork guards and a strengthened front fender. But deep inside where the naked eye can't see there are more mods...

While most manufacturers have given up on their two-stroke motocross bikes KTM have not. The 125 has got a remodeled piston, modified engine cases and a freshly tweaked ignition curve while the 250 has an enlarged induction area and lighter conrod that in theory will improve throttle response.

The pair of four-poppers have had their engine internals massaged too. The 250F gets a new exhaust cam, valve springs, pipe and silencer which should help improve low-end power but unlike its big bro there's still no electric start system for '08.

The all-new for '07 450 has a little weight shaved from the motor for '08 with a lighter crank and counterbalance shafts installed. The hydraulic clutch is improved while reprofiled exhaust cam lobes and updated timing will work with a new quieter silencer to deliver the 450's power more efficiently.

Fine-tuning of the range's WP forks should mean the forks slide more smoothly through their stroke and be much less likely to blow seals (cue Eskimo joke). And updated valving and stiffer spring rates for all bikes bar the 125 should help overcome any harsh feeling of bottoming out the '07 and earlier models experienced.

While it's all very well letting you know that this is new and that is modified we're sure it's rider reaction you're really interested in so without further ado here are our top test pilot and ex GP racer Tony Marshall's views on the '08 KTM's.

"With the two-stroke-only DEP championship proving to be very popular here in the UK there's more reason than ever for potential bike buyers to choose a 125 two-smoker over a 250 four-popper MX2 class missile. And the KTM 125 is extremely light (a tad over 90 kilos), extremely agile and extremely fast which makes it a great choice for pre-mix lovers.

"Feeling more like an over-bored 125 the '08 SX motor is very responsive with the bottom end hitting harder than Mike Tyson and with even more bite – it's certainly very impressive for a small bike with such a big carb. The mid-range is very impressive too as is the top – all-in-all it's a great engine for a 125 smoker and in the right hands has more than enough *oomph* to take it to the 250Fs. The jetting is dead on right through the full range too – there is no way it could be any sweeter.

"The chassis and the ride it gives are awesome too. KTM have toughed it out with their linkageless PDS shock system for a good few years now and the whole





On paper the changes to the '08 450 seem minor but they have a very positive effect on the MX1 machine

range of '08 bikes are the best handling KTM's that I have ever ridden. Fair play to them for sticking at it.

"Going up against the 125 smoker in the MX2 class is what I'd say is the flagship of the KTM fleet – the 250 SX-F. Since Ben Townley took the pre-production SX-F to the MX2 world title in '04 the bike has been a consistent contender for GP glory with riders like Tyla Rattray, Marc De Reuver and Tommy Searle – who won his maiden GP moto in Sweden on one of the orange missiles – in control.

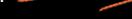
"It's fair to say these things flat out haul although the '08 does seem a little tamer down low than the '07 model – that's probably due to the extra silencing required for the SX-F to pass the FIM's tighter sound limits. But from mid-to-top I felt there were even more ponies on tap than this year's bike making it a real ripper.

"The abundance of power means you can be quite lazy when riding it too. One gear too

high or one gear too low, it doesn't really matter because the KTM will still go at a fair rate of knots without punishing your lap times too much.

"One of the best things about 250Fs is the amount of traction it's possible to find when riding them and the KTM is no different whatsoever – it's possible to find loads of grip with absolutely no power going to waste through wheelspin. That's just one of the reasons why the 250 SX-F is such an enjoyable bike to ride – I love it.

"The suspension on the 250F is well balanced and feels super-positive coming into and going around turns. In fact the suspension is pretty damn good all round with the bike taking big hits, braking or acceleration



450 SX-F

Capacity: 449.3cc
Bore and stroke: 97mm x 60.8mm
Transmission: Four-speed
Carburettor: Keihin MX FCR41
Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Wheelbase: 1475mm
Seat height: 925mm
Dry weight: 104.6kg



Obligatory BNGs!



125 SX

Capacity: 124.8cc
Bore and stroke: 54mm x 54.5mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Carburettor: Keihin PWK 39
Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Wheelbase: 1471mm
Seat height: 925mm
Dry weight: 90.8kg

The 125cc smoker has the cojones to take on 250Fs





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*Look but don't touch – the
144 ain't heading over
here just yet...*



Dream on!
KTM's 144SX

"Unfortunately this bike will not be coming to the UK as the FIM and therefore the ACU have not homologated it to run with the 250Fs in the MX2 class – bummer!"

"What a shame as this bike is every 125 riders' dream bike! I could not believe just how much fun it is to ride – there's just power everywhere. While everything feels pretty much the same as the 125 the power is just unreal and the motor just wants to pull and pull right through the gearbox – I was loving it!"

"I reckon that the 144 is much closer to a 250 four-stroke powerwise and a good rider on a 144 could wipe the floor with the 250Fs even at the highest level – I know where I'd put my money!"

Race the Blue



Follow the 2007 MX2 World Champion and race the blue Yamaha YZ250F... or you could choose the limited edition version in white! Either way, Yamaha have a range of race bikes that continue to set performance standards, year after year.

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"To be fair this bike doesn't do anything badly and is more ready to race at a high level than almost any other stock bike barring Honda's CRF450 – it really is that good."

"While KTM have always had great 125/MX2 class bikes their Open/MX1 class weapons have been less than friendly to anyone brave enough to race them in anger. Luckily for fans of orange bikes the 2007 SX-F 450 was a much breathed upon beast and did a lot of fine work in changing the way most people felt about big-bore KTM thumpers. The biggest and most obvious improvement for '07 was the electric start and I'm glad to say it's still here for '08."

"Being a bit on the small side I usually find firing up big thumpers a bit of a ball ache but there's no need to waste energy with this 450 – one push on the button and she's running."

"Now normally when I do a bike test I like to start small and work my way up to the bigger capacity bikes but sometimes the schedule just won't allow me to do this – guess what I had to start with in Spain? Yup, the four-fiddy."

"After a slow sighting lap I upped the pace and straight away I was shocked! This felt like a brand-new bike. According to the KTM bumph there have not been many changes made to this bike but what they have done has helped make this bike much easier to ride."

"While the 450 is still a man's bike it feels like it's possible to treat it with less caution than ever before. In years gone by I always felt like I was fighting the bike to get it to turn but all this bike wants to do is track with the rear end."



250 SX

Capacity: 249cc

Bore and stroke: 66.4mm x 72mm

Transmission: Five-speed

Carburettor: Keihin PWK 36 S AG

Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)

Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc

Rear brake: 220mm disc

Wheelbase: 1475mm

Seat height: 925mm

Dry weight: 95.4kg



250 SX-F

Capacity: 249.4cc

Bore and stroke: 76mm x 55mm

Transmission: Six-speed

Carburettor: Keihin MX FCR39

Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)

Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc

Rear brake: 220mm disc

Wheelbase: 1475mm

Seat height: 925mm

Dry weight: 98kg



The 250F's so good you can be real lazy with gear selection



working great with the front coming out of turns.

"The motor is very torquey with no nasty punch from the bottom. Not once did I find myself fighting with the bike thanks to the bags of progressive power the bike packs. Mid-range is slightly more aggressive and needs to be treated with a ton of respect and there's definitely no lack of top-end either but when ridden like a 450 should be this bike delivers its power in a very forgiving way."

"Suspension on the 450 is plusher than that puppy branded poo paper. The front forks feel great, the back's good too and together they

make for a well-balanced smooth ride with the extra weight of the 450 really working well in harmony with the WP suspension. Good job KTM!

"The other MX1 bike in KTM's arsenal is the 250 two-smoker. There was a time when this bike felt frighteningly fast as it had way too strong a motor for its ill-handling chassis. The great news is it's now a much better behaved bike although it can still get a bit rowdy at times – like all 250 two-strokes – as it's got a lot of power in a very lightweight package (95.4kg)."

"Of all the '08 KTM range I found the 250 smoker to be the most disappointing. Apparently the air intake has been improved as have the forks and rear shock but aside from that it's been mostly ignored."

"Out on the track my initial feeling was that the motor was running way too rich which I seem to remember was also a problem with the '07 bike. Luckily, there's still plenty of power forthcoming from the motor and the richness kind of helps make it more rideable by deadening the hit. The SX250 is by no means a bad bike but it's not a favourite of mine either..."

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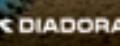
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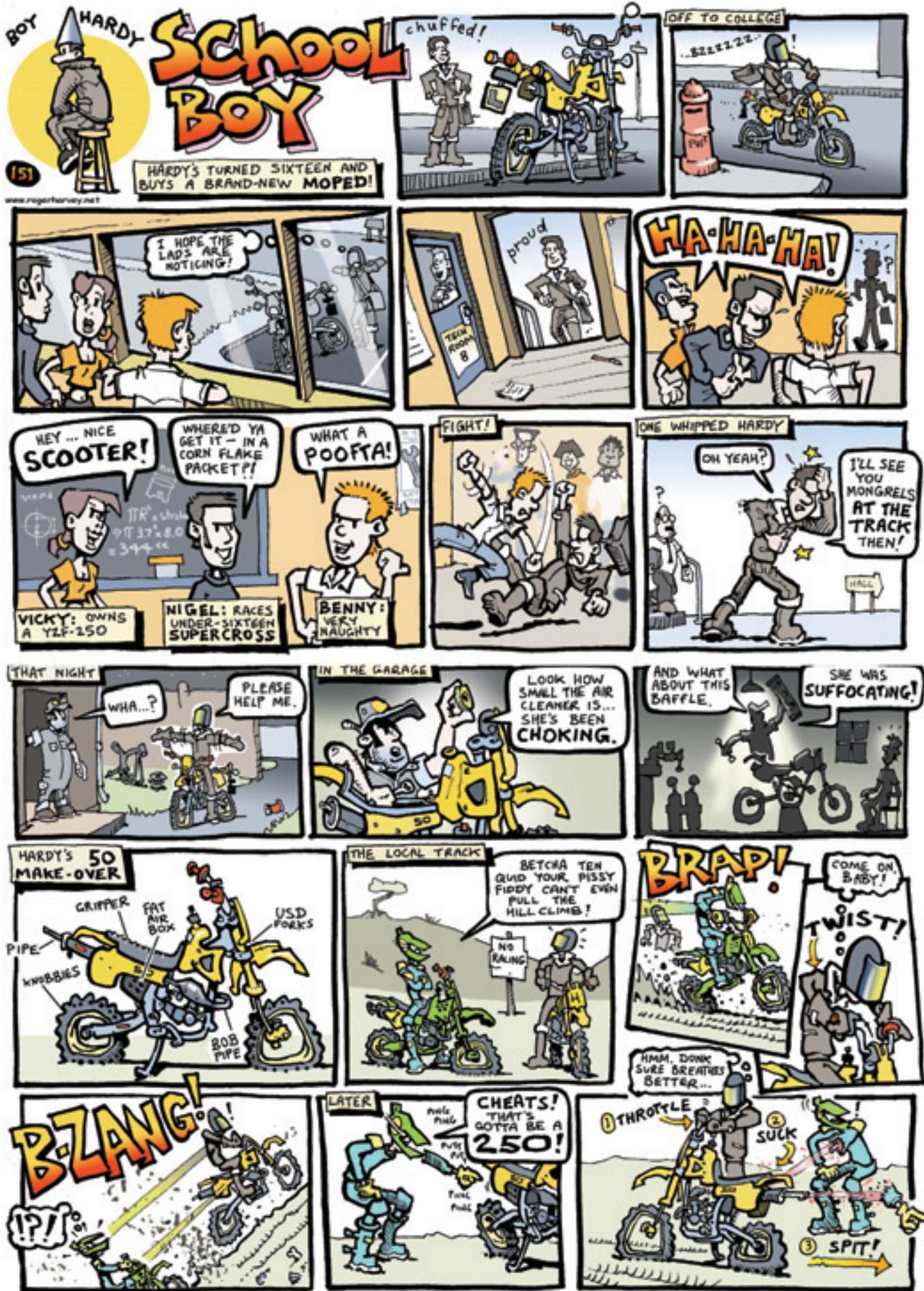
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Storm warning!
Well, what do you expect
from the country that
Count Dracula and the
Romaniacs call home?



FOUNDED IN the 12th Century, Sibiu is situated slap-bang in the centre of Romania and along with the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has been named European Capital of Culture for 2007. As well as welcoming culture vultures from around the world the Transylvanian city and its 155,000 population open their arms to warmly welcome 135 racers plus plenty of media blaggers, hangers on and event staff for the 2007 edition of the Red Bull Romaniacs.

With this year's race running just one week after the Enduro at Erzberg there's way more British interest than ever before with many riders doing the double header – Austria one week, Romania the next. While the Erzberg epic is a super-tough one-day affair in and around an iron ore quarry the Romaniacs is a terribly torturous five-day flog through the mile-high mountains that surround Sibiu.

While it's the tight trails, climbs, descents, rocks, roots and rivers of the Carpathian Mountains that will decide the final outcome of the event it's the inner city Prologue race which kicks things off.

A four-minute plus course littered with tyres, wooden wall rides, concrete steps and a

selection of loose, lateral and lengthways log sections mean there's plenty to catch riders out and entertain the crash-hungry crowd who come to see the Romaniacs.

The Hobby class riders kick things off and straight away it's looking great for the Brits as the Specialist Breakers/Sandiford team of Simon Douglas, Nathan Bolton and Darren Cowen finish a fine second overall in the opening 15-minute moto behind Romanian ringers X Riders 1.

And the rest of the British teams don't disappoint either with the Bon Accord Bravehearts – Dave Donald and Icelander Halldor Dorel Bjornsson – ninth, Ian Hill and Mark Bowden's Count Dirt-Killer team 13th, T+A's Tamsin Jones and Andrew Neri 18th while Liz Millet and German partner Christina Meier (EnduRoMania Girls) make it home 21st.

The biggest class in the 2007 event is the Expert division with over 30 teams taking part – six of them with British roots. With more than 60 riders taking on the course at the same time the Expert race is never gonna be anything but carnage and when the flag drops there are already riders down on the approach to the first log section!

Docklands Dirtriders' Chris Salt grabs the early lead before derailing his chain in a log section. Regrouping from that Chris and his

team-mate Matt Hall make it back to a combined seventh by the finish but even that fine performance is over-shadowed by Team Touratech's.

Due to a high start number Welshman Craig Bounds is forced to start on the very back row but by the end he's made it all the way through to first and even puts in one more lap than the next best rider. And with Craig's Touratech team-mate Nick Plumb using some Romanian rider style line selection the Welsh boys nail down the class win in fine style.

Behind the Touratech and Docklands Dirtriders things get a little more confusing as the scoring system goes completely to pot. The Motocross 365 team of Jon Kingston and Jason Ecclestone defy death on their way to 14th while the Blagg Roofing and Sussex Sport KTM teams seemingly scrap it out over 16th. The Sussex boys – Paul Skinner and Jon Wood – barely scrape home ahead of Richard

Storm in Sibiu!



Forget all about the Rumble in the Jungle and the Thriller in Manila because Sibiu is where the real warriors fight it out as the Red Bull Romaniacs thunder into town...

Words and photos by Sutty



Irea Mirel (Moto Club Vectra)

Walker leads Despres up a flight of stairs - the smart riders chose the lift!

Dan Zverenz
Mike Plumb (Team
Bounds
Dobby class
Mirin Popescu
Tea Cristinel
Gyekfi Geza
Lubomir Domokos
Mike Fehrmann
David Vollmer
Aaron Jones
Enrico Neri (Team
Walker's Word
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Alex Anthoine (KTM)
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Hansel - aka Paul Bolton - takes the Zoolander look and makes it his own...



Main and Darren Blagg by the end while the Rob&Lol team of Robert Carey and Lawrence Catt finish in 21st.

While the Expert and Hobby class races have already entertained the crowds sufficiently, the Pro class boys brew up an abundance of action during their 20-minute race. As well as the 19 Pro riders stunt star Christian Pfeiffer enters the fray on his Beta trials bike but as the race leaves the line it's defending Romaniacs champ Michel Gau who has the lead with Cyril Despres, Chris Birch and Frans Verhoeven all chasing hard.

But with less than one lap complete there's a new leader as Sandiford Honda/Specialist Breakers-backed rider Paul Bolton moves to the front. The laid-back Lancashire lad - fresh from his seventh place in Erzberg - has already made many Romanian fans with his wall riding exploits up a 13th Century citadel wall in Prologue practice and is now making even more with his hard-charging style.

As Bolts battles it out with Despres, Gau and Pfeiffer 't'other British entrant - DBR's very own Geoff Walker - is running a little further back after spectacularly back-flipping his bike inside the Brickhouse. Bad Geoff!

With time running out and Despres back in the lead Bolts can only chase the Frenchman to the flag while Dutchman Verhoeven finishes third in a finish which is tight, like a tiger. Surprisingly, rather than congratulating Paul on a good race well ridden all Cyril can say is "your bike has no lights" which the race organisers pick up on too.

Paul's not the only racer without a light but he's the only one forced to retrofit one. So while Cyril enjoys a relaxing facial and manicure back at the hotel, Bolts spends the evening welding a Stanley knife blade, scarily constructing a headlight assembly to fit to his CR250.

After the relaxed afternoon start of the Prologue the next day's action kicks off at the crack of dawn - Hi Dawn! - right in front of the mayor's house on a specially constructed stage. If for some strange reason you'd been logged on to www.sibiu.ro at 5am BST on Monday June 21 you too could have seen the start live thanks to the wonders of webcam technology. Woo!

From the city centre the racers head where

the bears poop for a super tough day of pushing, pulling and sometimes even riding their bikes. At the two-hour mark Despres is still at the front of the pack with Bolts pushing him hard although it's actually German Beta rider Gerhard Foster who's ahead on time some nine minutes back on the trail.

But as the afternoon progresses everything changes. Bolts cartwheels out of contention in the woods while Gau and Andorran racer Alex Antor move to the head of the field. Meanwhile, Walker's mincing about in what the locals call 'Death Valley' and after trekking to the nearest rescue point is eventually rescued. To be fair it's a lot of a dangerous situation and Wakker's lucky to escape unscathed but let's not let the facts get in the way of some good old Godfrey goading.

At the end of the day there are plenty of very tired looking people in the pit area. The Brit camp is looking slightly sorry for itself - Bolts finishes the day 11th but it's doubtful he'll start tomorrow because of chest and rib injuries and Wakker's 18th but has used his one spare 'time out' day.

In the Expert class Team Touratech lose time helping Bolts reach the finish but still finish third overall. None of the other British teams make it past the last cut-off point and like Geoff

have all used their one free 'time out'. The Docklands Dirlriders actually do make it to the mandatory 15-minute service point with three minutes to spare but unaware of the tight deadline spend 20 minutes in the check and aren't allowed out. When they find out they're fuming...

Things are a little more positive for the British Hobby riders. The Specialist Breakers squad make it back in 13th with T+A 15th, Bon Accord Bravehearts 18th and Count Dirt Killer Racing in 22nd. Well in girls and guys!

Day three - the second of the off-road days - is another super tough one. "Two hours after the start we felt like dying," reckons Austrian Hobby class racer Jurgen Zeiler. The result sheets show it's a shorter, easier day for the Pro class but that's slightly misleading...

Somewhere just after the midway point the three leading KTM riders are allegedly sent the wrong way - ignoring their GPS routes - by a course official. Realising a mistake has been made the Romaniacs organisers call the result at the last checkpoint every rider reached before being 'sent' separate ways.

Despite being a fair decision it all kicks off at the racers' meeting that night but the results still stand - Kiwi Chris Birch wins the day, Despres is second and young



The strain shows on Andrew Neri's face but like a proper northerner he makes it to the finish

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Defending champ
Michel Gau goes
for it in the Prologue



//sub// Day Five - The final day After the riders' meeting I knew we were all in trouble as I could see and Dougie's eyes that they were going to push the Pro class to breaking point

Yankee-doodledandy Kyle Redmond is third with Walker 14th. Team Touratech's pairing of Plumb and Bounds are way quicker than any other team over the course today but luck is not on their side. Just after the mandatory 15-minute service point is an Erzberg style rock section which is gnarly enough to puncture a hole in Craig's water-pump cover. The 30 minutes spent repairing the hole with liquid metal is five minutes more than the final gap between themselves and the day's winners Team BT Asigurari.

The only other Brit Experts who make it through the day are the Motocross 365 boys who realise it's better to take time penalties for missing checks than timing out on the trail. With around 12 hours worth of penalties for the day they're out of the running for a good position but still officially in with a shot of making it to the end.

The day also decimates the British Hobby class riders with only team T+A's tenacious Tamsin Jones and Andrew Neri as well as the

Specialist Breakers trio of Cowen, Douglas and Bolton making it to the finish on time.

Day four is basically day two's route in reverse so you know it's gonna be another toughie. Around 90 minutes into the stage the riders disappear up a hill into the woods. There's only meant to be one way out but judging by the number of routes the Romanian riders leave the woods on you know there's plenty of selective lines being used between check points – one Expert class rider takes over 20 minutes out of Despres in this 35-minute section.

It's Gau who wins today's stage by six minutes ahead of Despres. This is also enough for the defending champ to take the overall lead with just one day to go. "Being first on the trail meant I had to open at least four gates which took some time," claims Cyril. "We also had to ride down a very steep hill and I had some problems – that's where I lost the time to Michel."

Tough guy of the day award goes to Dutchman Marcel Pronk who falls around six

metres or so before breaking the fall of his KTM525 that in turn breaks his hip. Despite being in a lot of pain Marcel toughs it out without a whimper as he's carried to a waiting ambulance which then transports him for a further 20 kilometres off-road before reaching the Tarmac! And Romanian roads ain't that great either...

There's a new overall leader in the Expert class too as ex-500cc road race GP winner and superbike god Simon Crafar with his Romanian partner Pandrea Mirel dominate the day. Previous class leaders BT Asigurari edge out Team Touratech by seven seconds for third overall while the only other remaining Brit team in the class – Motocross 365 – time out for the second time and are disqualified.

But the Specialist Breakers team have another good day in the Hobby class – overcoming a broken rear wheel – to finish ninth while team T+A keep on keeping on to end out the day 14th.

With only one day to go (that's still between 130km and 190km depending on class) spirits are high among the remaining 78 riders – that's just 58 per cent of the original 135 starters. And that percentage of riders is dropped even further when race leader Gau slips off at high speed and breaks his arm.

While Despres stops to look after his broken team-mate it's Birch who takes over the running at the front for the remainder of the day. While Chris crosses the finish line first in Sibiu, after Cyril's times are recalculated to remove his time spent with Michel it's the Frenchman who wins both the day and the event overall making it three Romaniacs titles for Despres.

Walker saves the best until last to come home ninth on the day and 12th overall as well as being the only ever British rider to finish the Pro class.

Grabbing 13th on the day in the Expert class – and lucky to not time out after spending hours untangling Nick's chain from around the front sprocket and swingarm by bashing it free caveman style – are Team Touratech's Plumb and Bounds.

Without a doubt it's Craig who is the British rider of the week as his awesome riding



Nick Plumb and Team Touratech play a blinder



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and laid-back attitude win friends and fans if not Romaniacs silverware. Fourth overall is not a true indication of how well these Welsh boys really did and with a little better luck they'd have been in with a shot of winning. Look out for Craig taking on the Pro class boys next year..

Crafar and Mirel win the Experts by a meagre 11 minutes after over 27 hours of racing ahead of Team BT Asigurari's Aron Gorog and Dumoulin Michel and Sepp Sutner and Stefan Zwerenz's Bayern-Express.

The Hobby class is dominated by Romanians with the X Riders 1 and Kunn Racing teams edging out German MX-Team-Comic on the podium. British battlers Tamsin Jones and Andrew Neri hang tough all the way to the end, finally finishing in 12th spot. It's touch and go for Tamsin for a while after cooking her clutch but with a little trailside tenderness Tamsin's WR more or less makes it home.

In all only 66 riders – five of them British – make it to the finish of what must be the world's toughest enduro. If you think you can do better than the 51 per cent who didn't make it or just fancy taking on this epic enduro keep an eye on www.redbullromaniacs.com for details of the '08 event.

Results - Romaniacs 2007

Pro Class

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|--------|
| 1 | Cyril Despres | (KTM) |
| 2 | Gerhard Forster | (Beta) |
| 3 | Chris Birch | (KTM) |
| 12 | Geoff Walker | (KTM) |

Expert class

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Simon Crafar | (Moto Club Vectra) |
| | Pandrea Mirel | (Moto Club Vectra) |
| 2 | Aron Gorog | (Team BT Asigurari) |
| | Dumoulin Michel | (Team BT Asigurari) |
| 3 | Sepp Sutner | (Bayern Express) |
| | Stefan Zwerenz | (Bayern Express) |
| 4 | Nick Plumb | (Team Touratech) |
| | Craig Bounds | (Team Touratech) |

Hobby class

- | | | |
|----|------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Ciprin Popescu | (X Riders 1) |
| | Babes Cristinell | (X Riders 1) |
| 2 | Benedekfi Geza | (Kunn Racing) |
| | Gereb Domokos | (Kunn Racing) |
| 3 | Marc Fehrmann | (MX-Team-Comic) |
| | Harald Vollmer | (MX-Team-Comic) |
| 12 | Tamsin Jones | (T+A) |
| | Andrew Neri | (T+A) |



Jason Ecclestone – shortly
after he fell out of a tree!



Team Bon Accord
Bravehearts' Dave
Donald and Halldor
Dorel Bjornsson



Walker's VorDathlon!

**What it's like to complete the Romaniacs
straight from the horse's mouth...**

When the dust had settled on the '06 edition of the Red Bull Romaniacs, The Spode, myself and Sutty immediately started talking about the '07 race – bigger, better and slightly more organised for us... Yeah right!

With a couple of weeks to go before the race, Sutty heard he was going into hospital for an operation on his knee so I was left without a partner. "You should do the Pro class," suggested The Dawg. "Okay," said I... So there it was, with a quick email to Dougie 'legend of loop out' Maclean, Sutty had my entry sorted for the Pro class.

The Red Bull Romaniacs is an event like no other on our planet and as such it demands total respect. I developed this respect and love for the event last year as each grueling day passed. Absolutely every rider who enters and takes to the course has my own and everyone else's total respect as this event is all about balls (sorry lady riders) and bravery.

With my entry sorted and Team KP Equipe.com/DBR coming together we were getting set for it. To say I was tense about the whole event is a bit of an understatement. I really was ****ing myself.

The weapon of choice was sorted with KTM UK and I had the choice of the 250EXC-F or the brand new 300EXC-E. I went for the 300 two-stroke as its lighter feel and extra speed would be ideal for the event. That coupled with the electric start was the perfect combo. I had faith in the Orange.

I did receive a few raised eyebrows at wanting to attempt one of the toughest events on the planet on a bike I had never ridden before but this shows the faith I've developed in the enduro engineering department

of KTM. They really do make a bike ready to race straight from the crate with only a few personal preparation points to cover.

The Event

With Suttdawg at the helm the Fro Systems team Sprinter got us to Romania a day ahead of schedule as it seems Sutty is actually an advanced driving robot sent back through time to fulfil the dreams of one lucky lady. That's what Spodey reckons – I just think he's plain weird! The Dawg could drive for eternity.. The Tenerife 365 crew of Jason and Jon were in tow right from HQ and they soon learnt that the Dawg don't stop.

We finally stopped on the way around 20kms from the city of Sibiu where the race is based. We found a hotel with garages so Spode could put the final touches to the 300. The bike came together and wood was in evidence as I kitted up to go and ride for an hour to try to get the feel for the puppy.

The Spode took the spanners and produced a cracking bike for me to ride and Sutty took to the telephone and email to put a support package together to get us to the finish. This is how it works – we are a team and everything has to work otherwise there's no point as there is no chance of seeing the finish depending on luck alone. The bike felt great although it was night and day different compared to the little four-stroke.

So it was time to get it on on the streets of Sibiu and then head deep into the Carpathian Mountains. Look out Dracula!



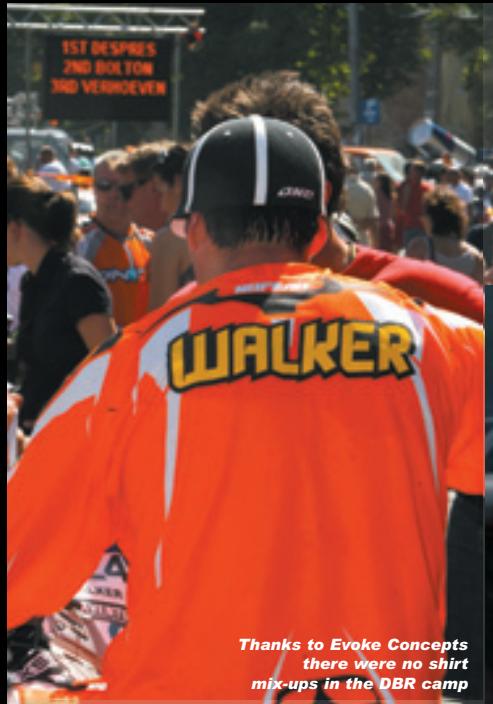
Day One

The Prologue course is absolutely mental – that's the only way I can describe it – but all the British riders were in good spirits for the Prologue which was really cool. I personally was pappin' myself as I didn't want anything to go wrong in the race to jeopardise the rest of the week after everyone had put in so much time and effort to get us there.

The flag went up for the Pro Prologue and I was off to a reasonable start. I just tried to stay smooth and race the course. After lap one I was around 10th and then I decided to try to backflip on the concrete steps inside the Brickhouse. After that I rode steady to the finish just having a little run in with Despres on the last lap as he decided it was a good idea to shout and run into me on the entrance to the Brickhouse just before the steps...

I got a little Irish on him and stayed bar to bar with him for a few 100 yards up through the faster log sections. It felt good. Anyway it was great to see fellow Brit Paul Bolton kickin' ass in the Prologue and pushing Despres to the end. Superb.

Day One finish P13



Day Two

With the start in downtown Sibiu followed by a 45-minute liaison out to the mountains things were pretty relaxed for a kick off. This all ended very quickly as the organisers clearly had a plan to punish everyone upon entry to the Carpathians. One gnarly climb and descent followed by another... This is what it is all about. Punishment from start to finish.

Things were going pretty well for me until about six-and-a-half hours in when my GPS navigation system took a funny little turn and I got a little off track – and a little was all it took. I traversed across a hill and ended up dropping into a ravine or a 'valley of death' as the Romanians like to call them.

I got myself deeper in the s**t as I spent an hour going further down the river trying to get out. I was well and truly stuck... Nothing worked in there – no phone, no GPS, no mini tracker. Nothing.

I made the decision to climb out to find help. It took two hours to cover around one kilometre out of the ravine. I then managed to get a lift on one of the guide's bikes to the bottom of the mountain where I met my saviour – Dan the Man!

This guy took his axe from his car and we started the trek up the ravine to find the bike. This guy was completely positive we could get the bike out of there while I was just trudging along behind him thinking he was a lunatic! I thought I had screwed it all up. Gutted would be an understatement.

What I didn't realise was that I was in the company of a magic man. When we found the bike Dan had no doubts, we were getting it out of there and I was going to get to the finish of the day so I could start the next. Sure enough as I rested for 10 minutes he started to cut branches and fallen trees to make a path for me to ride up the ravine.

I was absolutely exhausted as I had been walking in the mountains for around five hours in my kit. Dan got me off my arse and onto the bike and we started the long haul out of there. The guy put himself through all that as a volunteer which is unreal. We had to move the bike sometimes six inches at a time and around 14 hours after I had started the day we had the bike out of the ravine! Cheers Dan, you really are the man.

Day Two finish P18

Day Three

This was a survival day and we were all feeling the effects of the late night working on the bike and routes until the early hours. Up at 5.30, eat and get on it. I was knackered and rode the first half of the day at low pace to try to conserve and build energy for the next couple of days.

This event doesn't really let you recover so I was glad to get to the 15-minute rest point at half-distance.

Dan the Man!
Mad axeman and
Wakker's saviour



Geoff Wakker / Sand / Expert class

SIBIU Sibiu BRASOV Brasov



With Spode and Sutty on hand – as well as Team Miller – to offer encouragement and refreshment they managed to get me pumped for the second half of the day. The trails started to seem easier the harder I pushed and I really started to race the terrain.

Some of the other riders were having problems with breakdowns and crashes so I was beginning to take time out of a few people and in the second half of the day I moved from 14th in the day's running to 10th. I was pumped to say the least.

Little did I know that some idiot official had sent Despres and a couple of others down a route they shouldn't have been on! What's the GPS for Cyril? I follow mine at all costs but it seems these guys get to make mistakes – forced or unforced – and the day gets cut in half! Bless them. If an official tells me to go off track I would discuss it, not just race off line...

Their mistake meant I wasted an extra four hours of punishing racing and lost four places on the day. I was devastated, absolutely gutted and absolutely knackered.

Sutty, Spode, Ryan (the film guy) and some of the Brit pack (thanks Craig) got me back in focus and calmed me down – "Take it on the chin and get on with it. Bad Joffy!"

Day Three finish P14



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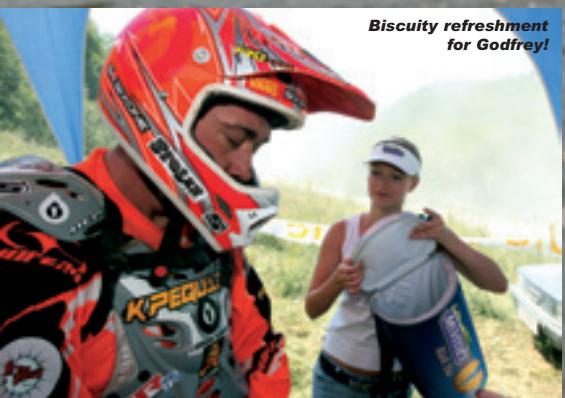
**Biscuity refreshment
for Godfrey!**

Day Four

This day was a complete tear up. It felt good to be getting through some of the most punishing terrain so far and riding with some of the other guys. The event throws up all sorts of problems and everyone gets them during the week. I would be riding with someone then they would disappear into the distance and I wouldn't see them for two hours then all of a sudden they would be stuck on a hill and in trouble.

You just blast on by – as long as they aren't hurt – and crack on with the race. This is the nature of the beast and it rocks. This was a long hard day of constant technical going but my body was at that numb point so the pain didn't seem to matter any more!

Day Four finish P13



**Spode never got the hang
of paper, scissors, stone...**



Day Five – The final day

After the riders' meeting I knew we were all in trouble as I could see in Martin and Dougie's eyes that they were going to push the Pro class to breaking point to try to eliminate the weak.

After a sleepless night going through every part of the bike, my kit and what was in store for us on the final day it really was time to make or break the deal. I simply had to finish, there was no question. On that day at that time, nothing meant more to me. I have never been so focused on anything before in my entire life.

Seeing last year's winner Michel Gau laying trackside after half-an-hour with a broken arm didn't help my frame of mind as I was checking every rock and root with all my focus to make sure I didn't make the same mistake as the Frenchman. Get well soon Michel.

I really felt the pressure and the track was well above my expectations as the uphills and downhills proved beyond anything that we had ridden previously. At one point I had a Romanian guy's 200 EXC land about 10 metres from me after it had bounced front over back for around 500 metres straight down this hill. That thing came cartwheeling into view at what must have been 50mph! I never want to see anything like that again!

The coolest thing in any form of off-road just has to be handing your bike to a Romanian guy and watching him strap it onto a zip rope and shoot it off down a ravine. So very cool...

Spode, Sutty and Team Miller did the trick at the rest stop and refuelled me for the push to the finish. I was dead on my feet but knew what had to be done. At this point in the race we are all equal, every racer is wrecked and it is the spirit of the event which makes you keep going. That is the Romanians.

The final 100 kilometres of the race followed and I was inspired to see Dan the Man on the first check I came too. He shouted at me just like a true team member and told me to push hard for the finish. I started to up the pace as time was running out and got in the flow. With the city in sight I thought it was cracked but they had one more surprise for us...

At some point during the day I had hit a tree with my left arm so hard I thought I had ripped my upper arm off. There was numbness all round. As I rode past the city and out the other side I could see the finish with the Red Bull arch on the hilltop showing me the direction to go and I headed for that point. The bad, bad men of the organisation team had put in a little surprise for us before the finish – a 100 metre climb to the finish and unless you were in the first couple of riders up there it was impossible to ride up! Fantastic! One functioning arm and an impossible hill to climb.

Then from out of the woods came SuttDawg and UK female rider Tamsin Jones. Sutty got my tow strap out and the rest of the Brit pack descended on me to help. It was absolutely awesome. Team Docklands Dirlriders (Matt and Chris) came down and together with Sutty and Spodey we pulled, pushed and dragged my bike and ass to the top of the climb. I can't thank everyone enough for that.

There was only 20 metres left to climb so I got on the 300 and took it up to the finish. I don't really have the words to describe how I felt at this time – the people were cheering, the cameras were there and my team was with me. It was simply unreal and as I write this five days after the finish it still hasn't sunk in. Unreal! Unreal! Unreal!

I couldn't have done it without a lot of help and I feel privileged to be able to write about the efforts of Team KPEquipe.com/Dirt Bike Rider. Sutty and Spode you guys are the nuts – thanks for all the hard work you sickos!

Day Five finish P9

Overall finish P12

Cheers m'dears

Doing this event is not possible without all of the sponsors and helpers. I thank each and every one of you and you have no idea how much I appreciate all your support for the race. Awesome... In no particular order I'd like to thank KP Equipe, KTM UK, McVitie's, the Nitro Circus Crew, Michelin, DEP, Fro Systems, No Fear, Spy, Sixsixone, Molson, Evoke-Concepts, Baseline Racing, Apico, Armadillo, Touratech, Renthal, Moto Surf, Direct Hygiene, 14Signs, Active Pump Services, Stolen BMX, Advanced Demolition, my old man Jimmy, the MCUI and MRA, Motocross 365, SR-75 and SuttDawg Energy.

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SuttDawg

Tamsin Jones

Team Docklands

Matt and Chris

Team Miller

Team KPEquipe

Dirt Bike Rider

Spodey

Team KPEquipe

Suzuka Bazooka!

Honda's Suzuka circuit has its own place in motocross history thanks to an inaugural 125 and 250cc double-header GP back in 1991 that was truly explosive...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle



TRAMPAS PARKER'S
SWEET WILL-TO-WIN
WON HIM THE 1991
WORLD 250 CROWN



DEFENDING CHAMP ALEX PUZAR (CHESTERFIELD YAMAHA) LOOKED A LIKELY WINNER WITH THREE ROUNDS TO GO...

BILLY MACKENZIE continued his remarkable love affair with Sugo at this year's Japanese Motocross Grand Prix. But the Sportsland complex, owned and developed by Yamaha, may be replaced next year by a venue belonging to their biggest rival.

Honda opened the four-mile Suzuka road racing circuit in 1962 and staged the first Grand Prix of Japan a year later. Hondas were suitably dominant, winning three classes at that historic 1963 meeting. Then, 28 years later, Suzuka staged another historic first. Not only the inaugural Japanese Motocross GP but also the first ever 'double-header' featuring the 125 and 250cc classes which have since transmogrified into MX2 and MX1 respectively.

Even more dramatically, Suzuka climaxed the 1991 season and while Stefan Everts calmly acquired the 10 points he needed to clinch his first title in the 125s, the 250s were an entirely different story!

Their season kicked off at Mill in the Netherlands where Belgian Marnicq Bervoets, on a Johnson Kawasaki, claimed his maiden grand prix success. Second and third were local aces Edwin Evertson – also on a Kawasaki – and Suzuki-mounted Dave Strijbos. But none of these guys would sustain such form over the next six months.

For the men who ultimately hit Japan locked in a titanic struggle for supremacy, Mill was a nightmare. Defending 250 champ Alessandro Puzar – having moved with Michele Rinaldi's Chesterfield squad from Yamaha to Suzuki – failed to finish race one, his rear brake jammed on, before rescuing runner-up through a burst of hailstones in the second.

Friend and foe Trampas Parker had signed for Honda with backing from clothing company Chambers who sponsored Honda's last works 500GP campaign in 1990. But Parker, his new factory Honda trapped in customs, could only muster a best of sixth after a pre-season knee operation. And his fellow American – flash, flamboyant flyer from the 125s Mike 'Gunner' Healey – announced his arrival in 250 GPs by cartwheeling his KTM into the first turn and ending the day pointless!

Puzar picked up the pace with a pile-driving double at round two in Dalecin, Czechoslovakia, ahead of Bervoets and Louisiana's Italy-based exile Parker. Bleached blond mohican Healey opened up his account with a close fifth overall, one point behind Yamaha's Peter Johansson.

Parker and Puzar traded race wins at Schwanenstadt in Austria though Sandro's first race DNF left him tied for third overall with Johansson and Healey. GP winner Parker went top of the table, one point in front of Bervoets and two ahead of Puzar.

At Mantova in Italy Parker won again from 'Crazy Horse' Puzar. Healey placed second to Parker's Honda in race two but trailed Trampas by fully 53 points in the championship after another first-race DNF. And at this juncture Parker, in his own words, felt he was "fixing a walkaway".

A fortnight later at Hyvinkää in Finland the sand turned everything upside down! Homeboy Pekka Vehkonen (Yamaha) grabbed overall honours from Healey and John van den Berk



was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera.
After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer,
magazine art director, photographer and part-time art
college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism.
Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words.
He never did get a proper job...



MIKE HEALEY POWERS TO AN AWESOME FIRST MOTO VICTORY IN SAN MARINO

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

but Parker's Honda seized in race one. He tiptoed uneasily through the second moto to claim a nervous 11th and lost his title lead to Puzar.

Finally, on a scorching June day round the slick, baked clay slopes of Baldasserona in the tiny Adriatic Republic of San Marino, 23-year-old Healey romped to a majestic maiden 250 GP victory. Winning race one from Strijbos and Parker's team-mate Michele Fanton, Mike almost achieved the double until, on an enthralling final lap, 'Fantomas' leapt alongside the KTM and beat the American to the flag.

Fourth overall after winning a titanic duel with Parker in race two, Puzar retained a tenuous title lead from Strijbos and Parker who was now a mere seven points ahead of Healey!

Mike celebrated with his English mechanic Graham Kent and the interval entertainers in San Marino, a gang of British punk bikers called the Mutoid Waste Company. Close to his own spiritual heart, they gathered joyfully around his modest

DESCRIPTION SIGN ELEMENT	
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MIKE 'GUNNER' HEALEY (RIGHT) WITH ENGLISH WREN (NIN GRAM KENT



camper van that evening!

But both he and Parker drifted back to joint fifth a week later at Arbis, in France, despite sharing race wins. 'Crazy Horse' won again as Strijbos faded to a damaging 10th.

The Belgian round at Nismes brought a season's first overall for Johansson, by a point from Bervoets. Healey, just one day younger than Puzar, edged out the Italian for third on the rostrum. But Sandro's fourth place prised open his advantage to a healthy 34 points with the Yanks nailed together in second.

Across the pond, Michigan hardman and reigning US champ Jeff Stanton (Honda) went 1-2 to claim his second successive Unadilla GP triumph ahead of Suzuki's Mike LaRocco. Parker scored a scintillating second in race one while Healey rescued sixth in race two. But Chesterfield Suzuki's world had fallen apart – a severe knee injury would prevent Alex Puzar competing in both America and Sweden and require surgery a week before Japan's final round.

Pekka Vehkonen won the Swedish GP on a tie-breaker with emerging youngster Marcus Hansson (Kawasaki). Fifth on the day meant that Trampas Parker would head for Honda's heartland in Suzuka with 217 points, an advantage of lucky 13 over the returning Puzar

and Gunner Healey who were glued together on 204.

The weather in Japan reached saturation point. Almost 100 per cent humidity and scorching sun oven-baked the drama of the day. And Stanton, having been crowned AMA supercross and national MX champion for a third successive season, flew in as Honda's potential spoiler.

Puzar's team-mate van den Berk was out injured so he was all alone. And Healey had been all year. Next Katoom in the series? Mike Fisher, twice 11th at Unadilla and therefore 33rd in the series, didn't go to Japan! In fact, only 13 Europeans made the trip, the rest of the field comprising Japanese natives and Jeff Stanton.

Beneath sweltering skies Parker holeshot race one from Healey and Stanton in an American 1-2-3 as Johansson, Strijbos and Bervoets went down. Healey swept into the lead until half-distance when Stanton took control. Puzar crashed in the whoops and recovered to finish a brave fourth but Parker's steady thrust to third meant the Chambers Honda remained favourite for the title.

Until the start of race two when Trampas hit the deck in the first turn and early leader Gunner Healey took over at the top of the table for the only time all year! Around 10 minutes in

Jeff Stanton demoted the KTM but Healey stayed second ahead of Puzar as Parker, his face a mask of sweaty sand, forced through the horde of Japanese mid-packers. His team drenched Trampas with bottles of water as he chased down Belgians Bervoets and Axel Holvoet, Dutchman Teus Visser and Swedes Johansson and Jorgen Nilsson. He needed at least six points to tie the championship lead and eventually burst past Bervoets to claim that vital 10th place.

In the end, Parker pinched sixth from a tiring Johansson and team boss Paolo Martin hung out an imploring board that simply said 'Stay up!' Trampas duly did and a gripping championship finale finally swayed his way by just four points.

But the show wasn't over yet! As Parker and Paolo embraced an exasperated Healey confronted Stanton, assaulting the AMA champ in the fury and frustration of knowing that in Stanton's absence two seconds would have been two wins and the title his by two points.

The Japanese Grand Prix returned for a further four years to Suzuka. Victories would go to Mike Kiedrowski, Alex Puzar, Yves Demaria and, in 1995, Stefan Everts. But none revisited the theatrical climax of that inaugural event 16 years ago!

RUBBERY JUBBLY!

Wakker sets the mousse loose about his hoose!

Photos by still-mx.co.uk

RACING IS all about staying ahead of the pack and to do this you must use any advantage you can to stay on track. Without bib mousses this would be an almost impossible task at the top level these days as in grand prix motocross and world championship enduro racing every rider uses mousse inserts in their tyres to stop punctures from stealing valuable championship points.

Mousse technology has come a long way in the last 10 years as the earlier units made the bike handle and feel completely different when compared to an air-filled inner tube that can be adjusted according to track conditions and available grip.

The mousses we can all buy today don't really make the bike ride any differently at all as long as your dealer sells you the correct mousse for your tyre size. If you fit a mousse

that is too big for your tyre – say a 130 mousse into a 110 tyre – you will feel like you're riding with about 25psi in your tubes and you'll be slipping and sliding all over the track or trail. That's one reason why mousses aren't so popular. Another couple of reasons are cost and fitment.

The cost is well worth it as the mousse will last a long time if you lube it regularly and you can never put a price on the happiness that comes with finishing every event puncture free. Fitting is pretty easy too – with a little practice – and if Spode can do learn to do it pretty much anyone can!

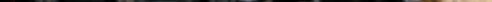
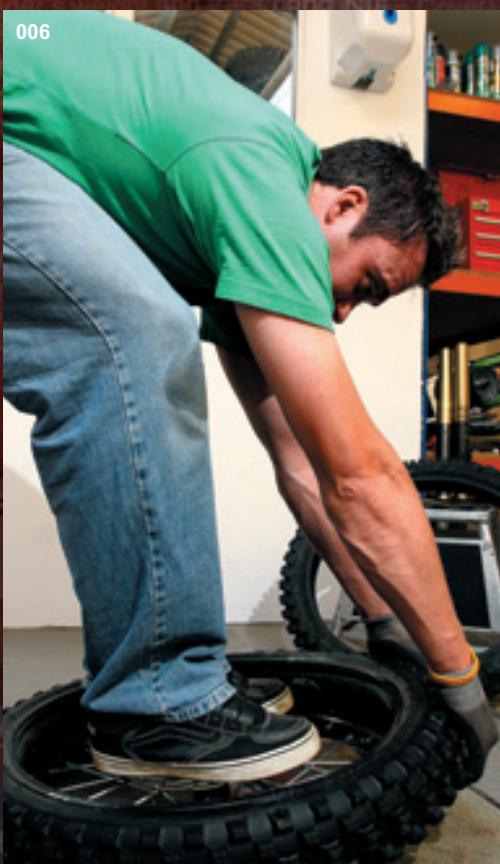
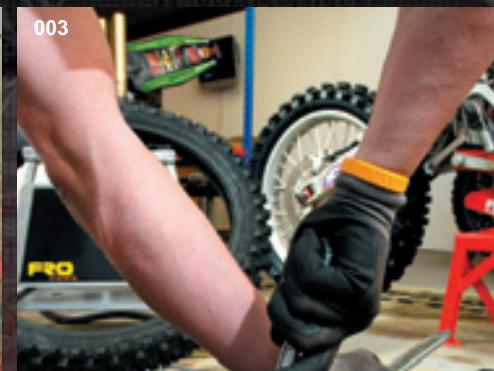
I'm going to show you how to fit a front mousse. If you're changing mousses for the first time this is where you should start as it's slightly easier to fit and is a good warm up for the rear which uses the same technique.

I personally fit the front mousses with no tyre rim clamp/security bolt for both motocross and enduro bikes. However, I do use a clamp for 18 inch rear tyres because they will spin and move on the rim due to their softer and more flexible sidewalls if left unclamped while the more stable 19 inch set-up will always stay true on the rim without.

The tools you'll need to do this job are as follows. A hand operated, tyre-changing tool is not necessary but it does help but I will show you how to fit the mousse without one. What you will need are between three and five tyre levers, some mousse lube, a hammer, a borrowed bead buddy (cheers Sutty), some WD-40 type spray, a workshop mat, a pair of lycra gloves and a pair of work gloves too.

Oh yeah and some patience will come in pretty damn handy too...





001 Get the wheel out and clean it. Place the workshop mat on the floor to hold the wheel better and lay your tools and spray beside the wheel.

002 Spray some lube around the tyre bead.

003 Using one lever in reverse, push the tyre away from the rim. This allows you to slip another lever down into the bead. If the lever doesn't slip in then tap it with the hammer until it's seated into place behind the bead. Repeat this until you have three levers in place.

004 Pull one lever back a little and the bead should start to release into the rim. This eases the tension on the tyre and makes it easier to remove. Pull the lever over the rim and repeat with the next two levers. This will get enough of the tyre over the rim to hold it in place.

005 Making sure there is still lube on the tyre and rim simply place a lever at three inch intervals and lever the tyre off until it is all off on one side.

006 Stand in the middle of the wheel and grip the other side of the tyre and pull upwards.

This will pull the mousse and tyre up over the top of the rim. Do this all the way around the wheel.

007 Now you need to stand the wheel upright and slip a lever up and under the tyre making sure there is about an inch of overhang on the lever.

008 Pull the lever over and push down hard. Now take the hammer and tap the tyre until it pops off the rim.

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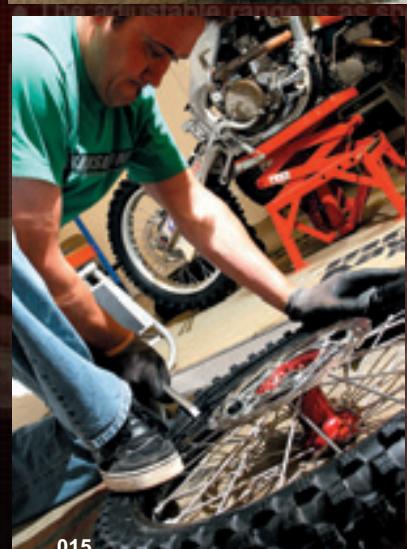
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009 Take the mousse and cover it in an even layer of special Michelin mousse lube.

010 Fit the mousse into the tyre. Place the tyre in the upright position then sit on the tyre to open it up and push the mousse into place.

011 Spray the tyre bead with the spray lube on both sides.

012 Lay the wheel down flat and place the tyre on top with one edge of the bead slightly over the rim.

013 Hold the tyre with your hand and start to lever it onto the rim. If it is slipping simply place your size 10 on it to hold it in place while you work – sometimes having big feet is a bit of a bonus!

014 With one side of the tyre over the rim, place your hands on the tyre and push the mousse and tyre downwards to seat it into place. You will feel it push over and lock into place... Lovely!

015 Pick a point and place two levers into the tyre and pull over. Place your borrowed bead buddy (cheers Sutty) into position to hold the section of tyre in place. This is your starting point for levering the tyre on.

016 Lube the tyre again and start to lever the tyre on. I use two levers for this and my foot. Lever one section over then hold that lever with your foot while you lever the next couple of inches over, then place your foot on that lever and remove the earlier lever and so on. Take small bites because if you get too greedy the

tyre will not go over the rim and into place.

When you get to the final few inches of tyre things generally start to get tough. At this point you need to lube and place a reversed lever into the bead a few inches from the last section, pushing it in to try to release the bead which makes the last section of tyre easier to lever into place.

017 Lever the last section of tyre into place and go get yourself a drink! If the bead doesn't pop out into place you may have to blow compressed air into the rim through the valve hole to push the tyre out into place.

That's it. Nice and simple huh? Practice makes perfect so best take your time and remember it isn't easy but it does get easier. Have fun folks!

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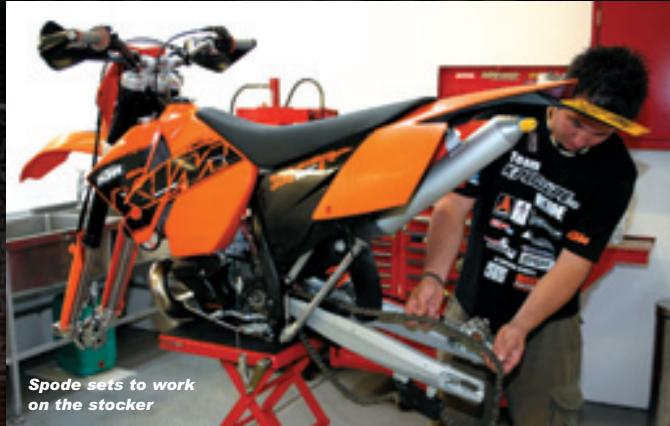
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MINI TEST!

Wakker whips out a new weapon – a KTM 300 EXC-E – for his Romaniacs adventure

AS FAR as mini bike tests go this has to be one for the record. We took a new model of bike straight out of the crate and raced it in one of the world's toughest events. Because of the nature of the beast – that's the event, not the bike – we allowed a little waterproofing and the fitment of handguards, a sumpguard and a few other bits and bobs but didn't touch a clicker on the suspension, a jet in the carb – anything.

We were going to see how the new '07-and-a-half 300 electric start two-stroke Toomer was going to fare on some of the gnarliest terrain in the world...

I picked the 300 EXC-E up from Shaun, Ross and the technical crew at KTM UK a couple of days before the event. The bike was basically new and had just a couple of easy hours on it. After getting the bike back to base I whipped my tools out and The Spode got his head down.

First thing to be fitted were the Cycra handguards that were going to run their second Red Bull Romaniacs – that says a lot for their strength. It's fair to say that Cycra are the daddy of wraparound handguards – enough said.

Low density foam was used in the bottom of the airbox, around the plug cap and carb and on the footpegs to help keep water and

badness away from these important parts. The Twin Air filter was covered with a Twin Air 'raincoat' – this is an extra cover for the filter that helps stop the water entering the inner boot by acting as an extra barrier on the deepest river crossings.

Michelin sent down the S12s to sort the traction and Spode had his first mousse fitting lesson. The sweat was on and so were the Michelins... Eventually.

The 2C/Multitek wheels were also going to run their second Romaniacs on top of the 150 hours they'd done in between. A product that just had to be strapped to the rear wheel was a Renthal TwinRing sprocket running with a Renthal o-ring chain.

The drive chain ran through and over some TM Designworks guides and slippers. These things are super-strong and use the latest technology to keep your chain in place in the toughest rocky going.

Craig Elwell provided DEP pipes for the 300, they're also super-strong and make good power which is essential for the job. That was all the parts we used to 'Romaniac' the bike. Spode got busy with some thread lock and she was ready to roll.

What a bike! The electric start is genius and for this event is a saviour in so many situations.

The E-starter didn't miss a trick in the five days of abuse which is a real credit to the KTM engineers. There was a problem with early bikes used for press tests but this was fitted with a different internal starter motor spring. The problem was easily fixed and every bike is checked and all are coming through perfectly now.

The way the bike produces its power caught me out on the first day of the race a couple of times but as the hours wore on the 300 was an absolute pleasure to race. I say race because it seems to love it. The bike cries out to be ridden hard but also enjoys being ridden at lower speeds in the really difficult stuff.

The chassis behaved impeccably in all situations and the only suspension change I would make would be a slight softening of the mid-stroke of the fork action. Nothing serious just personal to me as I like the forks to have a softer feeling for added control.

The bike climbed well, turned well and descended well and I can't really fault its performance in any of the situations I got to put it in from the streets of Sibiu to the deepest depths and highest peaks of the Carpathian Mountains. This bike looked after me and travelled over the gnarly ground with ease and balance. Thanks KTM and thanks 300 EXC-E!



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SECOND HELPINGS!

After heavy losses incurred staging the '05 Isle of Wight GP, Mark Chamberlain and his Motovision Suzuki squad took a year out from world championship MX. Now they're back and although the team name's changed the passion's still the same...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson





profile

*After a year's sabbatical
Mark Chamberlain's back
on the GP trail*

TEAMS COME and go in motocross and Motovision Suzuki could have been buried for good after the big losses sustained staging the 2005 Isle of Wight GP. But, like a phoenix out of the ashes, Mark Chamberlain and the boys are back in business this year – albeit under the label of chief backer Fork Rent.

"Basically the GP finished us off," admits Mark. "It was the final straw and we had to look at everything and had to change a lot of things in business and life. The team has been totally restructured for our return to GPs. In the past Motovision was the major financier – we were basically spending family money and it came to the point where that couldn't continue."

"When we took it on we wanted to save the British GP and we were led to believe that we were the only one, then there ended up being two. That's life and it wasn't good financially for either of us in the end."

"But at least there's still a British GP and that was why we did it! But it was a good learning experience. I learnt a lot in many ways so I've no real regrets."

Deep down Mark has one underlying wish – and this year he's made it a reality once more. "It was always my vision to run a GP race team. Last year we had to rebuild with a year racing solely in the UK. I don't want to sound arrogant or show disrespect to anyone racing at club level or national level but once you've experienced the top level it is difficult to step back. I don't mind admitting that."

"I was a bit disillusioned at the end of '05 and needed a year with less expense to test the situation but as soon as we got a wildcard at the first GP I knew that it was that or nothing

for me. I didn't miss it until that point but as soon as I got to Zolder I knew!"

And with Jason Dougan back on ship for the third time in 2007 alongside Jake Nicholls in his second year with the team, Mark's boys are 100 per cent home-grown.

"The principal backer is Fork Rent, then we've got Watling JCB, Suzuki, MVRD [Motovision Racing Development] on the technical side and Troy Lee with the riding kit."

Fork Rent is owned by Jake's dad Guy Nicholls, his aunt Trudi and uncle Jason so you can almost hear the cries of nepotism. But nothing could be further from the truth. "I first met Mark when he came to my local practice track with Yoshi Atsuta in 2005 and we got on straight away," explains Jake. "And Mark was the only person other than my dad who'd ever helped me."

Mark steps in with a more thorough explanation. "It was Craig Elwell of DEP who asked me if I could help Jake out with some riding kit. I'd seen him ride before that when he was 13 on a 125 on a practice day at Mildenhall and saw he was good."

"For 2006 we were looking at the British U21s and I wanted to do it with a new rider. Jake and [Ray] Rowson were the best two coming out of the schoolboys, Rowson was already tied in with Kawasaki so Jake was the natural choice."

And Jake was up for it too. "At the end of '05 I did two adult British championships with RWJ. They treated me good but I just didn't feel right there. Elliott's [Banks-Browne] dad



Jake leads long-term rival and mate Elliott Banks-Browne

Jake Nicholls Broken Dreams

Although he started racing at seven, Jake is still lacking race experience.

"I only ever had two full seasons in schoolboys – one year back on 60s and the last one in 2005. I can't actually remember all of the injuries. I've had 18 which have meant me going to hospital. When I was seven I broke my arm and shoulder, when I was nine I got second in the British championship, I was leading the championship the next year and broke my arm badly again."

"And when I was 13 I got on a 125 because I was too big for an 80 but I couldn't get a licence in England so I raced in Holland. I did all right so eventually they gave me a licence in the UK but my first race in England I smashed my elbow to bits and was out for another year."

"When I was younger I was a little bit pugly but I was unlucky too with people landing on me. Then all of a sudden I just grew and got to the height I am now. I was so skinny I just used to snap."

So what did mum think about that? "Mum and dad both wanted me to stop. In 2004 I had just come back from the bad elbow injury and I hurt it again. They didn't want to go to the races anymore because they were scared of seeing me hurt myself again but I went to some races with other people. I'd never wanted to do anything else but I also wanted to prove my dad wrong. He knew I was quite a good rider but just didn't want me to keep hurting myself."

"And I proved him wrong in 2005. Dad agreed to take me to the races again but he said let's just go and enjoy it. I just chilled out that year, I didn't get hurt all year. It all came to the last round in the British, I could have won but there was some block-passing going on just between me and someone else and Rowson won it."

"Last year was more about myself than anything else, just learning how to race. I could ride a bike fast but I wasn't a very good racer and I just didn't get the job done every weekend. Some weekends I'd win at the Under 21s, the next week I'd go to KWS and be ninth, all over the place."

In his GP debut year Jake has already laid the foundations with qualification at round three in Portugal and points in Japan and France. The second moto two-pointer in the Far East was even sweeter as neighbour Elliott Banks-Browne had got his first score in race one.

"I've always got on really well with Elliott. We were riding in different classes in the schoolboys. He'd win a race in his class, I had to win mine. We used to go training and riding together and it helped both of us. It's a bit more awkward now, in rival teams, particularly as they are both Suzuki teams. But there's a real competitiveness between us, we always want to beat each other which in some ways is good, though I might not have splattered myself all over the whoops in Sugo if I hadn't seen him 50 yards in front of me in the first race!"

"I knew it was going to be hard in the GPs. I had three goes last year – the first time I was way off, the second time I got close as first reserve in Ireland and I was not that far off in Holland. It's hard but the team is awesome. Mark tells you straight, I know I can trust him."

So is there a deadline before dad pulls the plug? "No but if I hadn't been anywhere near to qualifying then we wouldn't have gone to Japan. He has to see it happening and I have to deliver but I don't think I'd be any different. If I wasn't qualifying it would be a waste of time and I'd be working for him – working in the office, trading, learning what he does. I know I'm not going to be a millionaire from motocross."



© Sutty

**profile**

Fork Rent Suzuki,
clockwise from bottom
left, Ryan, Jake, Mark,
Jason, Eric and Ollie



Doogan prepares to touch down

TRUCKS 'R' US**Jason Dougan**

Third Time Lucky?

You've ridden for Mark in '03, '05 and '07. So why do you keep coming back, Jase? "I'm just happy here, get on with everyone and that helps to bring the best results. When you're happy, you race better."

So why'd you leave? "Last year Mark wasn't doing GPs, RWJ offered me a ride and I had to take it. And it was pretty much the same two years before when I went to RTT. It was an entry to GPs and when the offer came along Mark wasn't sure what he was doing. But both offers came with big promises which didn't happen."

"The worst thing at RTT was that there were the wrong people involved. They had all the bits to make it look good but it was my first year at that level which is difficult anyway and no-one was happy. It was the same at RWJ."

The atmosphere at Fork Rent is different. "Mark's still young and can have a laugh too, he doesn't mind us being a bit stupid at times as long as we're sensible when it's necessary – out on the track. Perhaps we're not 'too professional' but that's a good thing. Everyone on the team is passionate to do well but we all try to cheer each other up when it's not going well."

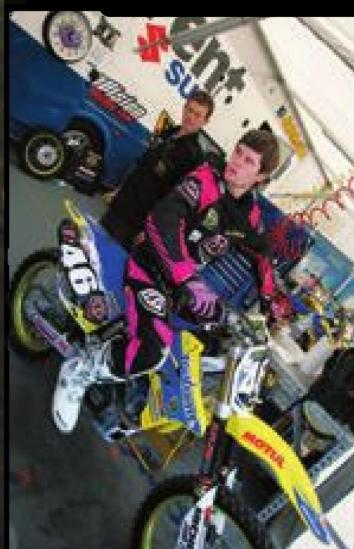
The season started slowly. "I wasn't riding my best at the start of the year, it's okay now but I had a problem with my back. But it's okay now and I've got my head down. I'm 20 now and at the end of the day it's my job."

Critics point to a lack of commitment. "I'm aware that people say I can ride a lot better than I do at times and in some cases it's probably been true but they don't always understand the circumstances. When I feel good and I'm fit I know what I am capable of."

And he showed it at the French GP. "The weekend already started well with good times in practice, then I had a good heat race to come from midpack to eighth. On Sunday I just got out of the gate, put my head down, stuck at it and finished seventh. That was my first GP top 10."

"I didn't get the best of jumps in race two, got hit in the first corner and went down. I think I would have had the speed to get back into the points but the radiator had been cracked in the crash."

And the relaxed style? "I always ride my best when it looks like I'm not trying. When I try hard, I start riding bad and lose time so it's best for me to ride confident and smooth. I've always looked up to Everts and I've always wanted to be stylish, not wild."





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was team manager and was always fair but he's only human and it's only natural that he would want Elliott to do better than me. And I've always been conscious about my dad's money and at the time I had the feeling RWJ wanted me purely for the money. Mark was just straightforward and wanted to help me which was cool!"

It was a natural step that Guy came on board – at first just as one of the team backers. "We've got a firm financial backer in Guy," explains Mark, "and we're grateful to him for that but we're looking around for more. I've got a lady by the name of Gina Houseman who is dealing with a couple of potential new sponsors for us and we have a couple more contacts through Guy."

Of course, outside finance is vital to travel the globe but Mark is still well aware of his roots. "If it goes really corporate we'd obviously have to look at the hospitality thing but at the moment I'd rather not lose sight of the fact that we are first a racing team.

"I think the people we are talking to understand that motocross first has to remain a sport with a friendly atmosphere but that we can up the professionalism of the team. And we don't want any financial issues, we want to make sure it's on solid ground.

"And that is where we are now!"



Ryan picked up too many injuries trying to follow in his dad Dave's footsteps

Top Techs

Ryan Thorpe

Younger son of three-time world champion Dave, Ryan learnt his trade during a three-year apprenticeship at Albion Motorcycles.

"It's very different to work for a team, concentrating on one bike – not different customer bikes – every day. I'm still learning a lot in engine development at the moment from MVRD, quite a lot of suspension work and map reading from Esra [Eric Chamberlain, Mark's dad].

"Dad's cool about it, he's happy as long as I'm happy and glad I'm not racing anymore. My racing career was short and painful. Dad never wanted me to ride and after I had a few pretty bad injuries I thought I'd better knock it on the head. I was always wild and dad never really taught me too much because he didn't want to encourage me."

Ollie Stone

"I did an apprenticeship at a local Yamaha dealership and spent three years at college so I've got all of the papers. I was helping Davy Yelland in the British championship and it was always my dream, ever since I was small, to work for a race team. Even when I was racing my heart was always in the mechanical side."

"I always spent more time in the garage prepping the bike than riding it. Ever since I was a little kid, six or seven, my dad used to take me to MotoGP and I always wanted to stay in the pits watching the mechanics rather than the racing. It's a job I enjoy and that's everyone's dream."



The Daddy!

Eric Chamberlain

"I have missed it. I set up Motovision videos to give the boys a career and they were good days from 1991 to 2000 but when Dorna bought the rights there was no room for us anymore so I did other things and let the boys get on with their own lives."

"But when Mark decided he was going back to GPs again this year I couldn't stay away any longer. I can drive the truck, I can cook a decent bacon and eggs and it's great to have another load of kids to keep in charge."

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TIMMY FERRY



Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and last year launched a new bi-weekly MX magazine - Motocross Illustrated - covering both AMA and GP action. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...



The 2007 season has seen Ferry make the podium six times on his way to a career-best third overall

dbr stateside



THIRD TIME LUCKY?

After earning – and then losing – two previous factory rides, Timmy Ferry's enjoying life with Monster Kawasaki

Timmy Ferry has had a tough go of it throughout his entire motocross career. He had to work hard to reach factory status only to lose his ride – twice – before landing on another factory squad. Now, at the ripe old age of 32 and having spent half his life riding professional motocross, Ferry's just recorded the best supercross season of his career with six podium finishes and a solid third in the points standings.

He headed into the outdoor season with more confidence than he may have ever had before and a team that's solidly behind him. We got a chance to sit down with him recently and talk about the good times, the bad times and the current times...

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TIMMY FERRY**dbr stateside**

So far this season Timmy's carried his great indoors form outside

DBR: You're probably the only guy to have lost a factory ride and then gotten one back again – twice.

TF: "I've been around so long that it's almost like I've had three careers but I don't really care what the media says or what some of the fans think. When I was down I just never really thought I was out. I think for the most part it's easy for the riders in general to get weeded out as the teams and the media push you to the side."

"But I do it because I want to, not because I'm trying to please anybody and I think that's probably the reason why I'm still here. I truly want to be here racing and when I don't want to I'm going to be riding in my backyard and still having just as much fun."

DBR: Where do you get that mental strength to push through after losing a factory ride? It seems easy to give up in a situation like that.

TF: "I don't know. I think as a kid racing was never that easy for me. I grew up fairly poor without real good equipment and it was always kind of hard for me. That's maybe another reason I'm still here. When I grew up I never had a modified bike until I turned pro. I never had my suspension valved until I turned pro. When I was a kid I rode because I wanted to, not because I wanted to be the next Rick Johnson or break records."

DBR: So you were kind of always outmatched...

TF: "Yeah, I think I was. I don't like to always be the underdog. I'd like to be the guy on top once in a while but I think maybe as a kid it came a little bit harder so it makes me work harder as I've gotten older. The first time I lost my factory ride [with Suzuki] I lost it because I was young and I didn't know how to train. I didn't know what I

really needed to do."

"When I lost it the second time I lost it because of an injury. It was never really my intention to get a factory ride back after I lost the ride with Yamaha. I just wanted to prove that I could still do it and there was a possibility that, if I didn't get this Kawi ride or something like it, it wouldn't have been the end of the world if I would've just retired and realized that I did good last year with MotoXXX and was done. It was never my intention to be on Kawi and doing this well."

DBR: Going back in time a bit, you graduated high school normally without home-schooling?

TF: "Yeah, I graduated high school. I turned pro in '91 and in '92 I was in 11th grade and '93 I was a senior and I raced all the Nationals and all the East Coast supercrosses. I missed the Friday practices but I still got on the podium some. It wasn't a big deal."

DBR: And then you go on to get the factory Suzuki ride, win the '97 Eastern Regional SX championship over none other than Ricky Carmichael and then lose your ride. What was the reasoning for you losing that ride?

TF: "I think it was probably a few reasons. I think my training wasn't quite up to par at the time and I felt like at the time that the bike wasn't up to par. There were times when I was leading Nationals – I remember at Millville passing Ricky and pulling away and then my ring got stuck."

"And there wasn't a spot for me to move up to a 250cc spot either. There was Greg Alberyn and I think maybe [Mickael] Pichon was already there and Jeremy [McGrath] was there in '97 and they didn't know if he was going to

stay so there were a lot of things like that. I just wish I could've been on a bike like Mitch Payton had at the time. I think we could be talking a totally different story right now."

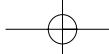
DBR: Pro Circuit do the engines in your bikes right now, is that right?

TF: "Mitch helps but Rick's the brains behind it here. Pro Circuit has helped us though and we have a really good working relationship to benefit the team in general. There's no head-butting going on and when you have good bikes, you get good results."

DBR: How much of a difference is there between privateer bikes and the ones factory riders get, the ones Joe Public sat at home would give up a hairy boy for?

TF: "There's a lot. I think the bike is lighter and it's a little faster and the suspension's definitely better. Suspension's the biggest thing for me. I'm really finicky. Growing up never having valved suspension, now I'm the most finicky rider ever. I'm not sure how that worked out. But there are a lot of things. Plus the teams do so much work during the week – it's not a weekend job like it is at the privateer level."

"It's a full deal. Your day off is the day you fly home. We're working on Monday. I think, with all that said, there's just so much more preparation going on behind the scenes and the bikes are better and my job is easier. I just ride the bike. Last year I was working on my bike at home and this year I was able to get a practice bike mechanic. Things like that add up – not spending two hours a day sweating in Florida changing motors makes things a little bit easier."



TIMMY FERRY

dbr stateside



Not many riders have the drive and determination to lose two factory rides and still come back to land a third

DBR: Are you saying the biggest difference isn't the actual equipment but the work that goes into the equipment, like the testing time for example?

TF: "I think the testing time makes a big difference. Luckily, I have my own track. Last year we didn't have a place to really test supercross. Honda let us come to their track one day and it was the day before one of the Anaheims so I was there until dark. But luckily I have a track at home but the team's not there. Kawi's got a good organization and they're not swamped with too many riders. Mitch takes care of their 250F programme and it's just me and James and we've got enough guys to take the work load off of everyone and the atmosphere's really good."

DBR: We heard that you don't get along with Roger DeCoster. Why is that?

TF: "A lot of it was maybe from back in '97. I think Roger was kind of hard on me but it was probably just because he wanted me to do better. He saw that I had more potential and he was probably bummed that he couldn't pull it out of me at the time. But back then the 125 programme wasn't a big priority and I probably took that personally. We definitely butted heads but I think he just wanted me to do good. I think it's really water under the bridge. I talked to Roger after 2001 and he said he wanted to hire me then to ride for him so that meant a lot to me."

DBR: And you had him as your MXdN team manager at Zolder in 2003, right?

TF: "Zolder was a train wreck from the beginning – not only from the track standpoint and the organization of it. It wasn't what it is today. I have kind of a bad taste in my mouth from that race. I probably just need to let it go because it looks like a lot better race now. But when I went there it was tough."

"Everybody else had their own rigs and their own paddocks and fans were trying to steal our gear and my family was having to stay and watch my gear while I rode. I'm not very happy about how that race turned out. If I would've won it, it still wouldn't have been that great of an experience. It was neat to be there and do it for your country and there was a lot of pride between the countries that were there but to be involved now would be a totally different story."

DBR: Many guys by the time they get to your age are burnt out. Why aren't you?

TF: "I think just the opportunity was so good. I had a really hard time last year going to MotoXXX. It was a big step down financially, for sure. I basically raced for expense money and I bought my own suspension and stuff because the team didn't have the money for that stuff. I worked on my practice bikes and I carried my suspension to every race... Last year was hard."

"This year, when I came in, everything was just set up. It was really easy on me. I just figured I had to take advantage of the opportunity and James is riding really good and obviously the bike's good and I just figured I'd put my head down and work in the off-season and see if it would all come together. I was hoping for top fives and here I am, I'm top three. I think with two years off because of injuries I was really happy to be out of being hurt and just being able to ride and not be injured. That's enough to rejuvenate you right there."

DBR: How has becoming a dad changed your outlook on racing?

TF: "It's definitely changed a little bit. I think he's kind of given me some more excitement in my life. Me and my wife [Evie] have been married a long time and people kept asking us 'when are you going to have kids?'. It came



along when I first got injured so I had a lot of time to stay home and spend time with him growing up and it's hard to have kids and travel and race. It took me a while to figure out how to manage that and do that. It took me a couple years to figure that out. I'm still working on it everyday and when you have kids you know what 'tired' really is. He's a handful."

DBR: Is he going to race motocross?

TF: "He probably is, actually. He's got a little battery operated quad and that's the only thing he wants to do. He's just 'Bubba, Bubba, Bubba' all the time. He's just learned to say 'two two Chad' and 'JT' and he can say 'dada' obviously and 'Ricky'. I have to hear about Ricky and Bubba when I'm at home all the time!"



AMA NATS WRAP



HIT AND RUN!

Carmichael puts together another unbeaten streak then takes his leave until Millville...

Just when you probably thought the legend of Ricky Carmichael couldn't grow any bigger he puts together yet another undefeated streak – although an abbreviated one – to start the 2007 Toyota/AMA Nationals.

After winning the first two rounds at Hangtown and Mt Morris he heads to one of his favorite tracks, although it's one he didn't anticipate racing. He planned on sitting out round three until the town of Southwick, Massachusetts, declared 'Ricky Carmichael Day' on the day of the National. Well, if he's going to show up he might as well race, right?

Monster Energy Kawasaki's Stewart grabs the holeshot in moto one and Carmichael is quickly on his heels but he hangs back after a while because he's eating so much sand from Stewart's KX450F.

"James and I were on it again that first moto and I ate a lot of dirt," Carmichael says. "There's no doubt about it. I got balled up in lappers a couple times. I kind of cleared my mind and got back going."

Stewart actually pulls out a bit of a lead early on but with only a few laps to go Carmichael picks up the pace noticeably and seems to will his way back up onto Stewart's rear wheel. On lap 12 of 17 Carmichael catches and passes Stewart and takes off for the moto win.

Stewart hangs on for second, followed at a distance by Yamaha's Grant Langston, Honda's Andrew Short, privateer hero Gavin Gracyk and Red Bull KTM's Mike Alessi. Everyone else is a lap down at the finish.

At the start of race two Carmichael quickly begins to pull away from Stewart but with Langston pressuring

Stewart, Carmichael can't let up. On lap eight Langston gets sick of eating Stewart's roost and makes a pass for second.

"I may have tried to sit there longer and give it my all at the end but I was just eating roost in every single turn and I was just over it," Langston says. "I just thought I would go ahead and maybe if he was eating my roost it would give me a gap or something but it just lit a fire for him."

Stewart passes him back on the very next lap and begins to pull away for second and from there the top three are set. Carmichael takes his third AMA National win in a row followed by Stewart and Langston and the moto finishes reflect the overall.

The series then heads to Budds Creek, sometimes

dbr stateside

Mike Alessi grabs the race two holeshot at Red Bud with James Stewart on his back wheel and RC mired mid-pack



referred to as Bubba's Creek, where it seems Carmichael will have his work cut out for him. He chases Stewart down from behind in moto one, only for a rock to bust out his goggle lens and force him to fall back. Stewart wins the moto while Carmichael rolls across for second. Showing up for his only MX event of the year, Chad Reed finishes third.

In between motos Stewart begins to feel under the weather and starts throwing up. That doesn't stop him from grabbing another holeshot – RC immediately goes to work on Stewart but he can't make a pass. Finally, on lap 12 of 17, RC makes a pass stick following Henry Hill. Carmichael goes on to win the moto and the overall.

Stewart hangs on for second and Andrew Short is third but he loses the overall placing when Reed passes

Alessi late in the moto for fourth. "I seen Alessi in third and that was a pretty good motivation [laughs]," Reed grins. "I didn't want to get beat by him today."

Carmichael loves Red Bud and it marks the last stop on his AMA National tour until the Millville round in August which will likely be his final AMA National. Nearly 30,000 fans show up this year for the National on Sunday alone, underlining its status as one of the country's top tracks.

Alessi gets the opening holeshot and Stewart and Carmichael chase him across the green flag to finish the first lap. Alessi gives way to Stewart on the following circuit and then Carmichael passes Alessi before going off the track. He's forced to re-group and go back after Alessi and then Stewart.

By the next time around the two Fox-sponsored riders begin to pull away as Alessi hangs on strong for third. Four laps later Carmichael makes a pass stick on Stewart but Stewart hangs onto the #4 bike and it pays off when Ricky makes another mistake and hands the Kawasaki rider back the moto lead.

"It took me a couple laps to get back going and then I was able to get by Mike and then I was able to get by James," Carmichael says. "I passed him on the outside there after the sand whoops. Then I pulled away just a little bit – probably a couple bikelengths – and I was going down the hill after LaRocco's Leap there and I couldn't get stopped, basically. I was trying to ride hard and put in some good laps and be roost free and I messed up and had to go backwards and turn around."

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AMA NATS WRAP

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From there Stewart goes on to take the opening moto victory with a couple of seconds to spare over Carmichael with Alessi another 45 seconds or so further back in third.

"I know when I'm racing this guy that I've got to race for 35 minutes and I prepared myself to do that," Stewart says. "Aately when he passes me he puts such a gap on me that I really can't do anything about it. It's just that three or four seconds and it's hard to make that up so this weekend I just tried to stay pretty close and he made a mistake out there and went off the track and I closed back up but there were only a few laps left. I just pushed it to the end."

Alessi gets the second moto holeshot as well while Stewart is right on his tail and Carmichael is almost mid-pack. However, by the end of the first lap Carmichael already sits fourth behind Alessi, Stewart and Gracyk. Alessi holds off Carmichael until the fourth lap when Carmichael finally makes a pass stick and sets out after Stewart. Carmichael seems unable to get within striking distance of Stewart until, with only three laps left to run, Stewart pitches it into a right-hander too tight, catches his front brake lever on the inside barrier and goes over the bars – handing the lead, the moto and the overall win to Carmichael.

"When I got behind him I couldn't do anything with him," Carmichael says of Stewart. "I was trying every other line and he had me covered everywhere. I was just kind of sitting and waiting and trying to plan something and he had some bad luck over there and it allowed me to get by."

So with one more AMA race planned for Carmichael he sits at 149 AMA National wins – 48 in supercross and 101 in the AMA Nationals. How sweet would 150 be? 

Aces high! JS and RC have a Red Bud dogfight



SERIES STANDINGS

Motocross

1	Ricky Carmichael	241 points
2	James Stewart	225
3	Timmy Ferry	163
4	Andrew Short	160
5	Grant Langston	159
6	Mike Alessi	147
7	Kevin Windham	132
8	David Vuelmin	110
9	Davi Millsaps	102
10	Michael Byrne	100



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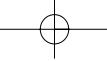
Tony Cairoli
MX2 World Championship

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AMA NATS WRAP

dbr stateside

SERIES STANDINGS

Motocross Lites

1	Ryan Villopoto	238 points
2	Ben Townley	218
3	Josh Grant	184
4	Jason Lawrence	176
5	Ryan Dungey	150
6	Jake Weimer	110
7	Josh Hill	105
8	Tommy Hahn	104
9	Brock Tickle	86
10	Kyle Chisholm	78

Ryan Villopoto is in pole position to defend his #1 plate



Ben Townley leads the Lites pack

Ryan Dungey's championship charge ends at Red Bud

GREEN GIANTS!

Villopoto and Townley dominate Lites

Heading into Southwick, Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Ben Townley trails his team-mate and defending champ Ryan Villopoto by eight points in the Lites championship.

The Lites class has turned into a battle between five riders as every week it seems Villopoto, Townley, Ryan Dungey, Josh Grant and Jason Lawrence seem to separate themselves from the rest of the pack.

Southwick is no different as Villopoto leads the first moto from start to finish over Townley, Dungey, Grant and Lawrence. Dungey gets the second moto holeshot but Townley takes the lead from him before losing the lead to Villopoto, who then crashes and hands it back to Townley who takes the win and the overall.

Still without an overall win going into Budds Creek, Villopoto is confident and knows he came from way back in the pack to win there in 2006. He sweeps both motos on the day with apparent ease over Townley to extend his points lead to 14.

Then comes Red Bud – one of two tracks Townley raced in 2006. However, on Saturday Townley misses the second practice with abdominal pain and heads to the hospital with a suspected appendicitis.

"I came in from the first practice and I wasn't feeling too good and I went to see Doc Bodnar and I got real bad real fast after that," Townley says. "There were all sorts of symptoms so I went up there and we spent all evening at the hospital and found out that it was nothing. I don't really know what happened to be honest. Originally, they were saying it was my appendix but I felt a whole lot better this morning and I came down here and got

checked out and did a bicycle ride and when my heart rate was elevated I was feeling fine. Then, from the second practice, I was all good from there."

Grant gets the opening holeshot but, feeling ill himself, quickly makes way for the PC duo. Villopoto takes the lead with Townley on his tail but Townley never mounts a significant charge and finishes less than three seconds back. Lawrence finishes nearly a minute later in third with Grant fourth and Tommy Hahn fifth. Dungey, normally in the top five, crashed out of Saturday practice and his return to the series is undetermined.

Townley gets the second moto holeshot but Villopoto is quickly on his tail and the two begin to take off again. At about the halfway point Villopoto makes a pass stick and that's it. He pulls away to a comfortable victory over Townley while Grant finishes third, a further 80 seconds back.

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CANADA GUY!

Radio America's back! Woohoo! With a new man at the helm!
Woohoo! Woohoo! And he's Canadian! Woohoo! Woohoo! Woohoo!

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by STEVE COX

Good day mate! Ummm, no...I mean...bonjour! Not working either? How about this...hi everybody!

Just thought I should get the introductions out of the way – my name's Steve Matthes and the guys at DBR thought that I should get to be the one to talk about what's going on in America. I'm pumped to be writing for all of you and getting paid in tea and crumpets seemed like a pretty sweet deal as well.

It's also an honour to write the same column that the Grand Poobah of Racer X, Davey Coombs, started way back in 1989. I'm a Canadian living and working in the USA and I can remember looking at copies of DBR on newsstands in Canada. I always thought it was pretty damn cool that Thorpey test rode the bikes and I liked looking at the strange machines and riders racing the GPs. In case some of you don't know, I currently write a column for the guys at Racer X Canada and I do some web stuff for America's best motocross magazine (yep, Racer X).

I live in the city of do anything at any hour you want – or Las Vegas as some people like to call it. I'm also employed by the country's biggest motorcycle parts distributor – Parts Unlimited – and am responsible for the FMF brand for them.

I am first and foremost a fan of the great sport of motocross and I like to think that I write like that, it's just I have a bit more inside access than the average guy. Think of me as the Robin Hood of MX – I will get some golden info from the rich factory guys and pass it on to you – even though I kinda look like Friar Tuck.

I started my journey into pro motocross by becoming a mechanic at the PJ1/Extreme Clothing Yamaha team in 1996. If that doesn't jog your memory then maybe this will – Jimmy Button rode for us the year after he did the GPs and everybody had to wear the brightest-ass gear you've ever seen. The whole team looked like we had been exposed to some kind of radiation testing. My rider was a bloke (I'm trying to get you guys to like me) named Cory Keeney and him and I didn't exactly hit it off – he seemed to want to live the lifestyle of a top racer without getting the finishes. This wasn't that cool to me as he would yell at me when he got 17th every moto, like I had anything to do with that? I switched to another former GP rider named Shaun Kalos who was a really cool guy, except he never really talked much. I loved the game he would play with me where he would show up five minutes before going to the starting line. Good times.

The next year I worked for a privateer named Ty Birdwell, he was a great guy with a really nice family. Unfortunately he was ranked #89 and wasn't that fast – I did manage to take him to #88 the next year, so I got him to improve right?

After that my career kind of hit a roadbump, I got a job with FMF/Honda and Danny Smith was my rider. I knew it wasn't going to work out that good when the second day I was out testing with Danny he told me about his buddy Mike that was going to work for him next year. What a bright future I had with this team, huh? Once again I am going to try to appeal to you guys by telling you that I worked with an Englishman named Tom Wallace who is my friend to this day. He gained his fame (?) by working with a rider by the name of Mark Eastwood.

It was after this year that I pursued my dream of being a mechanic in the GPs. I had met Billy Liles the previous

summer and he put me in touch with a KTM team in Germany called Kneip Racing. It was all set! I was going to live in Germany and do the GPs with my rider Mikka Saarankoski, a fine Finnish chap who had a propensity to run around our shared apartment naked. I negotiated my salary and thought it was okay but I didn't realize the cost of living was so high. I was also miserable as the team owner was, how do you say, a tightwad. He wouldn't let us change parts on the team's bikes and he was pretty demanding on us – even charging us for coffee in the workshop. Mikka wasn't very fast either, great guy but I wasn't hitching my wagon to his star (although he was very quick in the sand – if all the GPs were held at Lommel he would be a champ). I was pretty miserable and did I mention the weather really sucked as well?

Just checking my messages one day led to another life changing event – Team Noleen in America needed a mechanic for their rider Tim Ferry and my name got mentioned. After speaking with the team owner and leaving the small part of me being halfway around the world out of the conversation I took the job. I went back to the shop, packed my tools and left the next day for the

pretty happy. Of course in those conditions mechanic prep was key and I came through with flying colours if I do say so myself. It was during my two years at KTM that I first met Kurt 'second place' Nicoll who I talk to every weekend and who is a great guy. Just kidding about those seconds Kurt...

In 2002 I worked for another privateer rider – Nick Wey – and he had a great year getting the top privateer in SX. This was probably my most rewarding year as Nick and I were putting our own money into the team and we overcame some adversity to do pretty well. My friendship with Nick was tight and we remain buddies to this day. He has a great family and will never, ever give up in a race. That's all you can ask for as a mechanic.

I was in Michigan with Nick when I got the call. Timmy Ferry needed a mechanic at Factory Yamaha and requested me, would I be interested? Well, I almost doubled my salary and I wouldn't have to pay for flights with my own money – seemed pretty good to me! Timmy and I were like two peas in a pod (did I really just say that?) and in 2003 he had 13 podiums during the year, even winning a moto at Budds Creek. But all good things



This man has unlimited parts and likes ice hockey, maple syrup, Terance and Phillip and a bunch of other Canadian stuff we can't think of

Anaheim Supercross with my GP dreams shattered.

The 1999 season was a dream for me. Yes, I had to drive across America in a really crappy box van but Ferry was on the comeback trail and managed to get top 10 in SX and top privateer. Chaparral Yamaha picked us up for the outdoors and together we were a super team that couldn't be stopped. Except that I got fired in the fall! It seems that the team budget had gotten too big for the owner and he had to let a guy go and me being low man on totem pole I was out.

Again, I was lucky to land on my feet in Factory KTM's first big effort into SX/MX. It was cool to work there and help everything get started. My rider was Kelly Smith and he won the muddy Mt Morris National in 2000. It was KTM's first win in North America and everybody was

come to an end and in 2004 he crashed and his wrist didn't really heal until the summer of 2006. He and I struggled to duplicate our previous years but at least our friendship remained strong and I couldn't be happier for him and all his success in 2007.

So that was it, Yamaha decided not to renew his contract at the end of 2005 and my new rider was Heath Voss...for about a month. I had enough with the wrenching and when the Parts Unlimited job came up I went over and joined them. Ten years of wrenching had come to an end but, lucky for me, I got a great job that lets me go to the races and Racer X – and now DBR – lets me talk about them.

I promise I won't be so me, me me next month. Thanks for reading...





With team boss
Claudio De Carli
in Japan



Tony's form this
season has been
sensational



THE TONY EXPRESS!

Injury may have stopped Antonio Cairoli from defending his 2005 MX2 world crown but this season the Team De Carli Yamaha hotshot is fully fit and flying...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

LOYALTY IS not a common word in the cut-throat world of business and these days world championship motorcycle racing is most certainly big business. But it's refreshing to know that there's loyalty in many corners of the motocross world – and even centre stage.

"It was very important for me that I stay with Team De Carli," admitted Tony Cairoli after signing a three-year deal with Yamaha in Japan. "Claudio has helped me so much. I have one of the best bikes in the GP so now – when I have the possibility to repay him – why should I change? And don't forget that Claudio believed in me and gave me the chance when I was nothing. Now is the time for me to say thanks to him!"

Refreshing, outgoing, personable – they're all words that suit the 21-year-old Sicilian down to the ground and which, added to his all-action style and never-say-die racing commitment, make Tony one of the most popular riders in world motocross.

After a display of dominance during the opening half of the season, the first question Tony has to answer is why he has been able to so comprehensively turn round last year's world title defeat?

"Preparation. It's just because I could train properly this winter with no big injury like the winter before. The injuries which kept me off the bike after I won my first title meant that I couldn't test the bike and I didn't have a good feeling with the bike during the first half of last year. I wasn't ready for racing, my physical condition was not so good, the mind also not."

"I wasn't physically ready for the first few GPs but I still wanted to win and I took too many risks. After the first crash, then another, the confidence was down and the stress increased as the points gap to the leaders grew. It all just multiplied and suddenly I was a long way behind."

"And Chris was just so consistent. He scored every race and it was difficult to catch up. I was just as far behind in 2005 but when I kept winning McFarlane came back to me. Chris was always there, always scoring good points. All I could do was win and hope he would lose points but he never did."

"In the second half of the year I was trying to put the championship out of my mind and I was having a lot of fun with the bike. I was winning many races, my confidence was high and this year is a continuation. For sure my speed this year is the progression I should have made all through 2006."



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Tony on...

Sicilia

"Whenever I have one week free I go back to Sicilia. I really like to escape from racing and go back there to chill out, though Sicilia is not so different to the rest of Europe. It's just like everywhere else in Italy, not like in the old films. But I can relax more there. My family are there, my friends. I don't get completely away from motocross. I have a small team of my own with my nephew riding 85cc."

Team-mates

"I think Matteo (Bonini) can be really good. He is so fast in training but his condition is not so good at the moment because he had so many injuries. He was fast in Portugal and I think once he manages one complete GP, two motos, then he can race top five. His technical abilities are very good and fast. Alessandro Lupino is still very young and it is always very difficult to move into the GPs. Last year he was still racing 85cc and now he rides 250 in the GPs. It's a big step. He has to learn."

Opposition

"I don't think about the opposition. I have to look to myself and the strategy of the team. I want to secure my future and I think this is the best solution for me at present. Swanepoel is coming better and better already this year, Aubin also. There are not so many riders who look as though they could be challengers at the moment but every year there is somebody in MX2 who creates a surprise. Like in 2004 when it was me!"



So what have Tony and the De Carli team changed on the bike for 2007? "Not so much but what we have done has all been very positive. We have found more power in the engine. Leo Vince have produced a pipe exclusively for us and it gives us much more power lower down."

"I should have been getting better starts and the bad starts at the start of the year were my fault. I didn't practice starts enough in sand before Valkenswaard but I was still confident for the next races, then it rained in Spain and they put down sand at the gate. But I have practised starts more again now and I got the holeshot in Italy, Germany and one race in Japan."

I wondered what De Carli was saying to Tony before the first moto in Sugo. "We are talking about the start. It is such an important part of the race and we were talking about my gate preparation, that's a vital factor too."

But there must be more too. In Spain Tony was two seconds a lap faster than a flawless POURCEL at the end of the day and the rest were a further four seconds off the pace.

"Chris and I are much faster than everyone else at the moment. I think our condition is perhaps better and we have even been faster than MX1 sometimes. I knew before the season started that I needed to be so fast. Christophe is so good and I knew that if I wanted my title back I would have to beat him."

"And I have to beat him more often than he

beats me. We are so far in front this year that I cannot look to other riders to take points off him so often. Consistency and speed were vital and we have had some good races. But even if one of us makes a mistake second is still possible."

Tony's home GP at Mantova must have given him a special thrill after setting faster lap times than MX1. "Yes. It is a track where you would expect the big bikes to be faster but at the Starcross in February I race the 450s head on. I like the track so much and can push hard."

And the special gear in the national colours of green, red and white which Tony pulled out for the races. Does he plan to wear it at the Nations? "I would like to but I don't know if it will be possible. The Italian federation have their own ideas with Team Azzurra in blue but for sure I will wear it if I can."

While Tony's scaled new heights this year, his rivals have looked tame at times. How does he rate the chasers in '07? "Chris is still really fast but he makes a lot of small mistakes. I think his mind is half on America and it has affected his concentration. He is so good at SX so it is natural that he can hardly wait to get there."

"I don't know what has happened to Tyla. He has been fast for many years now but it seems like me and Chris have progressed and moved up one step and Tyla and the rest have stayed at the same level and have not been able to follow."



profile



Have it! Tony squeezes out Tyla Rattray

Cairoli sees his future racing SX Stateside



Dedicated for at least three more years to each other, how do Tony and Yamaha envisage the next steps in his career? "I want to stay two more years in Europe but I have worked out a deal where I can do some races in America when I have a free weekend."

And 2008 will mark Tony's final season in MX2. "When I do go to MX1 I want to be sure that I am ready to win and I think I need one more year preparation. But I also want one more year MX2 because I enjoy riding the bike so much."

"I think it is easy for the team to prepare the bike for MX1. They already have the experience from the year when Federici rode the 450. But I think I need to prepare – in my mind, in my body – to know the mental approach of how to ride the 450 and win. For sure I could be fast if I rode MX1 next year but I don't know if I could be good all season. When I race MX1 I want to win!"

Tony also quickly rebuffs any suggestion that he's not built for the bigger bike. "I only raced once in MX1 – the Nations 2005 – but I already had my wrist injury. And racing a 450 with one hand is not a good idea. My results were not a true reflection of what I can do on a 450. I think you have to keep both feet on the ground in MX1. David [Philippaerts] had a bad start to the GPs but I think it was not so good for him that he won so many motos at the start of the year. Perhaps he was just a little too confident going to the first GP!"



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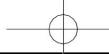
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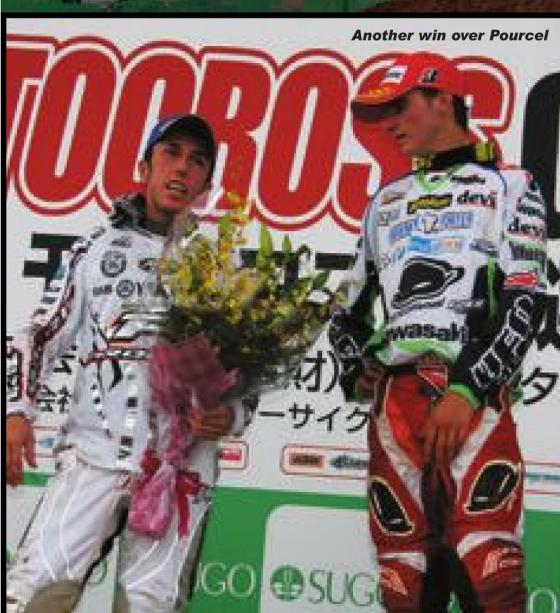
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Tony Cairoli
MX2 World Champion 2008

**profile**

Cairoli took on the best in the world at the MXDN and came out on top



His speed may set him apart from his rivals but just like many young Euro guns he does share a desire to try his luck Stateside. "It is just one possibility that I will go to America in 2010 – but a high possibility! Already next year I want to race as many races as possible in the

US. I don't think I will be able to race so many Nationals because the GPs will have priority but I'll probably do four SX races, no pressure, just for myself, to learn and to have fun.

"I plan the same schedule in 2009 and the deal I have with Yamaha is that whenever I race in America I will have the direct support of American Yamaha, not a satellite team.

"When I go to the US full-time, whether it be 2010 or later, I want to race both SX and outdoor but when I make the move my priority will be SX. I don't feel confidence for SX yet but I'm still only 21 and it's not too late – all the riders who've been to race SX in America tell me that the tracks there are faster, not so technical as Bercy."

Any suggestion of misgivings about going to the States without Team De Carli meet with a non-committal response. So will De Carli race in the US?

"Maybe! We are like a family and we do a lot of things together. It's not just about racing, we go training together, we prepare the bike together, we relax together, we have a good ambience and we have built up a good relationship with all of our suppliers – the tyres, the pipe, the suspension. We can relax together but we also work hard together. Everybody is part of the success."

"Perhaps it would be possible for us to go together. Yamaha are very open to this, just look at Chad Reed who has his own team. We can discuss this and I would be happy if Claudio decided to do this!"



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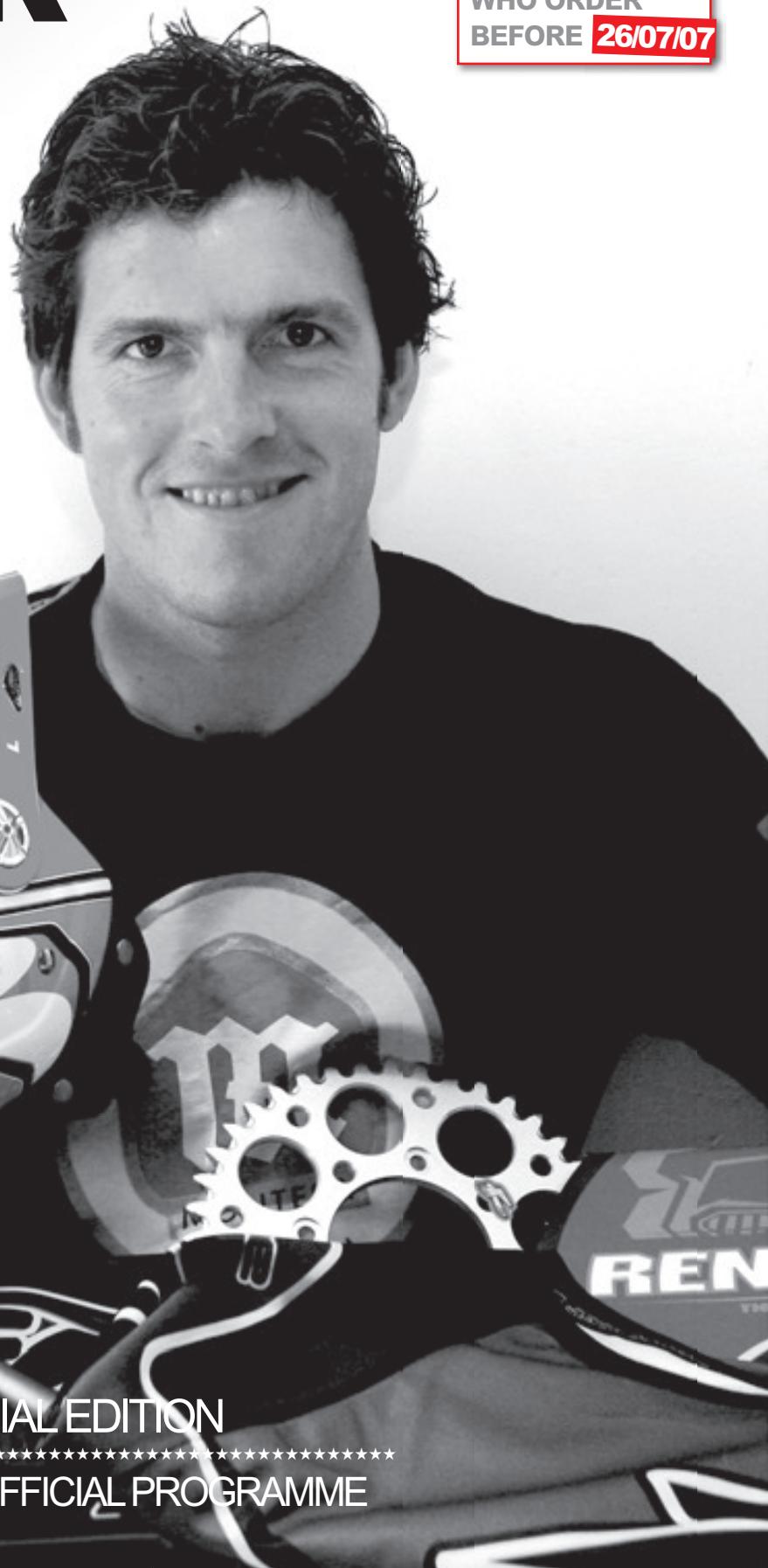
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* Multi-world champion Dougie Lampkin will be joined by members of his world championship team plus European champion James Dabill to offer literally the best trials tuition on the planet. Obviously, due to his hectic competition schedule and promotional duties the opportunity for Dougie to be available for public training days is very limited, making this school too rare a chance to be missed. The days will take place on 7th, 8th, 9th & 10th August 2007 at a venue (to be confirmed) near to Silsden, West Yorkshire, which will cater for all ability levels.

profile

CHRIS BIRCH

LIVING THE FREESTYLE DREAM...

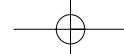
Words and photos by Sutty

HOW WOULD you like to make a decent living riding for a factory backed KTM team? Dating a super-hot alternative supermodel would be good too, eh? And you wouldn't mind scoring a sponsorship deal with one of the globe's leading skate shoe companies right?

If you answered all three of the above questions with a big 'yes please' then it's pretty safe to say you'll think 23-year-old Chris Birch is a pretty lucky guy because he's either done or doing them all. Is it fair to say he's living the dream? I should flippin' well cocoa...

If you don't closely follow the faltering UK freestyle motocross scene then you may wonder who hell he? Chris isn't to be confused with the badass Kiwi enduro rider of the same name, fellow UK FMX star Chris Brock, the Birch tree or even Kris Kristofferson, the actor who played the leading role in cult '70s trucker movie Convoy – 10-four good buddy? So who is he?





Well, Birchie is a genuine individual who's simply doing what makes him happy and doing it in style. While Chris may outwardly appear to be a bit of a meanie with all his tattoos and that – "I've got a full sleeve, my hands and my whole back is pretty much done" – he's actually a very well spoken, polite young man who just happens to have what it takes to be one of Britain's very best freestyle motocross riders.

After serving a lengthy apprenticeship with Andy Godbold and the Bolddog/Lings Honda freestyle team it was a surprise move to the Jimmy Verburgh owned and Belgian-based FMX4EVER squad last summer that really got the ball rolling for Birchie. And riding for the team run by the man who went down in history for block-passing Jeremy McGrath to steal the final transfer spot in the LCQ on night one of the '96 Bercy SX has been nothing but a positive move.



Character Assassination

Mulisha wannabe or what?

A fondness for the colour black – check. Gnarly tattoos – check. Flat-peaked Flexfit cap – check. Chris Birchie certainly ticks all the necessary boxes needed to join the troops of the wannabe Metal Mulisha corps but despite all outward appearances Birchie is not the Mulisha wannabe you might perceive him to be, if you judged this book by its cover. Chris laughs when – tongue-in-cheek – I ask if he's a potential Mulisha henchman. "I like black and I like tattoos – it's as simple as that. It's just my style, it's what I like and it's just a coincidence that my style is the same as theirs." That's that sorted then...

"FMX4EVER is now a fully backed KTM factory team and all of our sponsors are really good too," says Chris in between X-Fighter teasers at the Donington Download music festival. "It's actually an unbelievable set-up for freestyle and I really couldn't be in a better place. There are loads of great riders in the team and other affiliated riders who run FMX4EVER stickers on their bikes right around the world – it's quite a big deal."

Not only have Chris' levels of happiness increased 10-fold since joining the squad, so have his levels of on-bike confidence and the number of tricks and combos he's pulling. And that's not the only thing that's increased – his amount of Airmiles have gone through the roof which is another bonus for Chris. "I really love travelling and meeting new people – they're some of the things I love most about this sport."

Earlier this year Birch was given the opportunity to travel some more and take part in what was once the holy grail of FMX events – the IFMA tour. "I'd expressed an interest in travelling to America to do some shows last summer when I was riding the Hardcore FMX tour in Europe. It's basically Team Europe Vs Team America and most of the American riders are connected with Live Nation and Clear Channel who are the organisers of both the IFMA and Dew Tour."

"I was due to stay with Derek Burlew and Mike Mason but then I got moved to the east coast and I had to change everything. Leading up to when I was going I was a bit nervous because I was travelling on

my own and I didn't really know anyone out there. Then when I got there one of the other guys saw that I had all my tattoos and my bike with black plastics said 'uh-oh not another Metal Mulisha wannabe'. But after a few weeks he'd figured out that I'm not actually like that and he and everyone else was really cool – I made a lot of good friends."

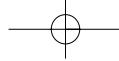
But aside from bonding with the locals and making some solid friendships Chris found the IFMA tour was not all it's cracked up to be. "The stuff I did wasn't like the proper IFMA stuff you see on Extreme TV with the dirt courses. They only had one dirt course this year – that was in Houston – but for the most part the comps were held on mobile landings in concrete floored arenas.

"It's like they're cashing in doing the comps as cheaply as possible. There's no prize money and all the riders are paid the same except whoever they're paying extra to do the backflip – he's the guy who usually wins. It was cool to be a part of and I saw some really good riders and some tricks that I'd never seen before."

With the IFMA tour not being quite what Chris expected he's looking ahead to getting involved with the new big thing in Stateside FMX. "The Dew Tour has all the best riders and by far the best courses," reckons Chris. "That's where I'd like to be in the future but first I need to start backflipping and see how it goes from there."

"I have set myself targets but I don't like to brag about them or tell people what I'm thinking. I don't wanna say I'm gonna do this and I'm gonna do that because people will be like 'yeah right'. I'd rather just get on and see what happens."

"I want to ride as much as I can and I want to get really good. I really want to be able to work off all the sides of the bike as well as upside down. I see freestyle as an art and



profile



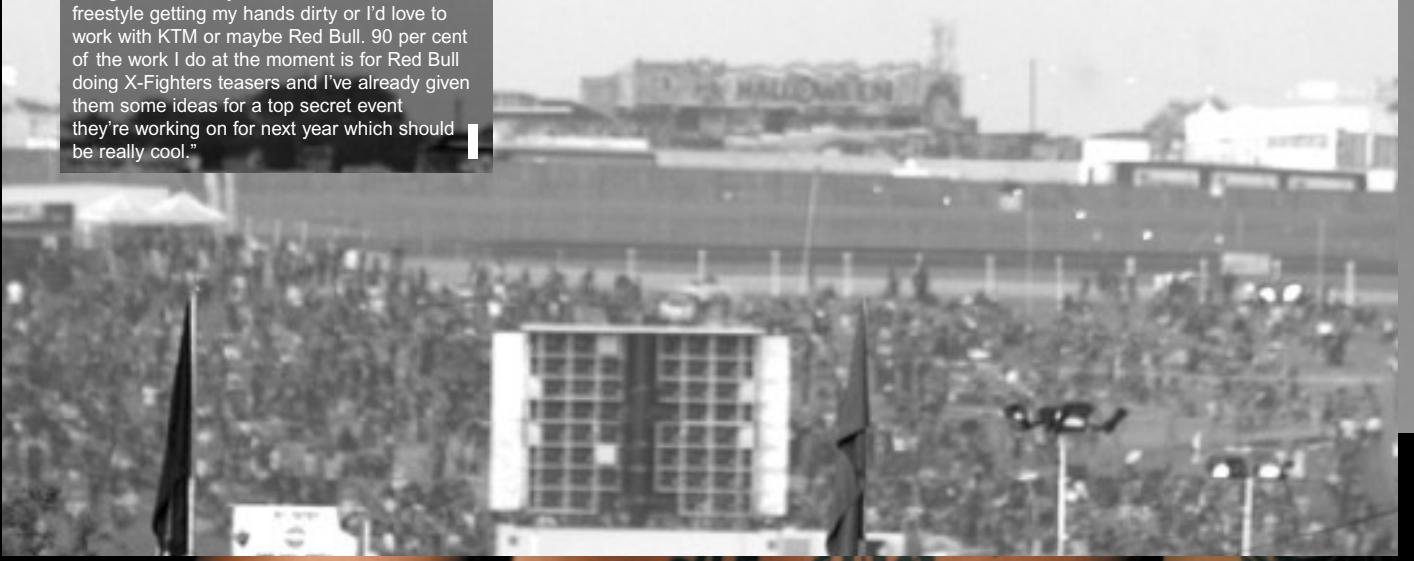
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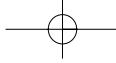
With US skate shoe and clothing company DVS making a big push into the UK market it comes as no surprise that they've picked up Chris as one of their athletes. "DVS are awesome and they're a super real cool company. They really support me and they've already named a hat after me – the Birchflex. Okay, maybe it's just a coincidence that it's called the Birchflex but it's still named the Birchflex." As well as being a DVS sponsored rider Chris also gets extra help from Throwdown ("who are heavily into UFC type sports, they make the cages for that as well as FMX ramps"), Lazer helmets, Stoica Graffix and O'Gio as well as FMX4EVER and all their affiliated sponsors.

every trick I do I want to be perfect – done as big as it can be done extension wise but it's got to look good from getting off the bike to getting back on.

"I'm giving myself until I'm about 25 to really push it with freestyle – that's how old Mike Mason was when I met him and that was just before he got bronze at the X-Games."

But even if Chris's three-year plan doesn't work out he still sees himself sticking around the sport that's already given him so much. "I'm sure there'll be options when I retire from riding. I wanna stay in with motocross or freestyle getting my hands dirty or I'd love to work with KTM or maybe Red Bull. 90 per cent of the work I do at the moment is for Red Bull doing X-Fighters teasers and I've already given them some ideas for a top secret event they're working on for next year which should be really cool."





medical milway

Alan Milway is a qualified sports scientist who runs MX Fitness specialising in training motocross and enduro riders. For more information on how Alan can help you train go to his website www.mxfitness.co.uk or call him on 07810 827427



BELT AND BRACES!

We wouldn't dream of rolling up to a startgate without a helmet or boots but what about a neck brace? Our MX medic states the case for proper protection...

Words by Alan Milway

MUCH OF the enjoyment of off-road riding comes through pushing yourself and your bike to the limit – and most of us have at some time or other reached the limit and then surpassed it. This is more commonly known as crashing!

Injuries are not uncommon in off-road events – ranging from bumps and bruises to much more serious breakages. But the pros obviously outweigh the cons which is why we keep doing it!

While broken bones are serious, we can (for the most part) recover fully from them and look to return to riding or racing in a matter of weeks or months. What we don't count on is an injury that affects us permanently – not just our ability to ride a bike but our ability to lead a normal day-to-day life.

Recently there have been some tragic injuries that have brought into focus the dangers

of racing motocross and the sight of a young man or woman in a wheelchair is a stark reminder that things can go very wrong at some point. Tragically, these injuries seem to be occurring more readily in recent years. This may be due to an increase in broadcasting of this news, an increase in people riding, or perhaps the tracks or bikes have something to do with it? But I'm not here to discuss why, instead I'm more concerned with what we can do to protect ourselves.

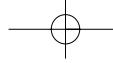
We do take some measures to aid personal protection in the form of helmets, goggles, gloves, boots, body armour, knee braces and, er, long sleeves. So you go to the line knowing your head, eyes, hands etc are pretty well protected but what about your back and neck? Potentially the most vulnerable area, it's also the hardest to protect and the area where

injuries can have the most serious, far-reaching repercussions.

The spine is a collection of 33 bones (known as vertebrae) that support our body and give us posture. It also envelopes and protects a bundle of nerve fibres known as the spinal cord. The spine is divided into three regions – cervical (seven bones), thoracic (12 bones) and lumbar (five separate bones – the rest are fused). Damage to the spine will be labeled according to the vertebra damaged.

For a rider, hitting your head and more crucially bending the neck excessively due to the impact and nature of the crash is the most serious of injuries and can cause damage to not only the bones of the neck but also the spinal cord that runs through them.

For us to initiate any action – breathing, lifting a cup of tea, running, twisting a throttle,



mx medical



going to the toilet – our brain sends a nerve signal to the muscle group needed to perform the action. Now, all of these signals pass through the spinal cord before branching off towards the various regions of the body. This is where we can see the seriousness of any damage to the spinal cord. If the nerve impulse cannot pass un-interrupted on its journey, the muscle will not be able to contract and the action will not take place.

If damage occurs high on the spine – at the region of the C1-2 vertebrae – many involuntary actions are affected such as breathing or the control of heart rate and this can be fatal. Damage to any of the cervical vertebrae can result in full or partial quadriplegia (this is the same as tetraplegia) where all four limbs are partially or fully paralysed. Damage to the thoracic or lumbar vertebrae can result in

paraplegia – paralysis of the legs and hips but the upper limbs and breathing functions are not usually affected. Depending on the area of damage, balance and posture in the sitting position may be affected.

As we can now see the neck is very vulnerable and the consequences of damaging it or any portion of the spine are very serious.

It is due to the severity of injury possible that protecting the neck is a serious business and there are now a number of braces on the market. Essentially a brace forms a cradle on your shoulders to minimize the movement of the helmet and head in extreme circumstances. It prevents hyper flexion and hyper extension (extreme bending of the neck forwards or backwards) as well as side-to-side rocking and compression of the head downwards. As you can imagine, being involved in a crash that

causes these movements is not something anyone wants to dwell on but along with a quality helmet to protect the impact on the head, a brace will help protect the neck in the same impact.

I'm concerned that there's a certain morbid undertone to this article – serious injury is not something I ever like to talk about. But I do want to help educate as to the reasons why we see riders in wheelchairs and why products such as neck braces have been developed. I would love to see all riders adopt them and for the price to tumble. However, I'm not saying you must wear one – that is down to you and I do not think anyone should be guilt-tripped into it – but knowledge is power so the more informed you are the more informed your decision for or against a neck brace will be.



brit mx wrap

**Swanny leads TC
and James Cottrell
with Nunny and Tommy
Searle close behind**





GIANT STRIDES!

**Keeno steps closer to Billy in MX1
while Tommy Gun marches clear in
MX2 – and you probably thought we
were on about huge trousers...**

Photo by still-mx.co.uk

AFTER BAD LUCK in Lyng and mixed results at Langrish CAS Honda's Ken De Dycker finally makes positive steps towards defending his MX1 Maxxis British motocross title by doing the double in Desertmartin and pulling back Billy MacKenzie's championship lead to just 13 points with three rounds remaining.

Despite leading both motos early doors Kawasaki Racing Team's MacKenzie can do no better than a pair of fourth place finishes – the first time Billy's not grabbed a podium position all year – citing bad back cramps as the cause for his disappointing results.

Gordon Crockard's 3-2 scorecard secures the second step on the podium which leapfrogs the Irishman from fifth to third in the championship behind Billy and Ken.

After taking three out of five possible overall wins this season and clawing back to within eight points of series leader Tommy Searle, South African Gareth Swanepoel's championship assault suffers a major blow in Desertmartin. "It was a bad day for me with two poor races," says Swanny later. "I had a pretty big crash in the first moto and hit my head."

"In the second I was fighting with Tommy and we pulled away from the others until I clipped him and went over a berm. It was another pretty heavy fall and I hurt my ribs – I just wanted to finish from there."

Swanny's slip ups allow Tommy to secure the overall with 1-4 finishes – just one point clear of Molson Kawasaki's Tom Church – to further increase his championship lead to a whopping 37 points over CAS Honda's Mike Brown who only manages 5-6 finishes on the day.

It's been a slow start to the season for the Bike-It/Dixon boys but all three finally shine through in Ireland. Martin Barr's quickest in quali and second behind Searle in moto one while team-mates Carl Nunn and championship newcomer Carlos Campano finish first and third second time out – sandwiching Church – while Barty Marr suffers his first DNF of the year.

Series standings

MX1

1	Billy MacKenzie (Motorex Kawasaki)	260 points
2	Ken De Dycker (CAS Honda)	247
3	Gordon Crockard (PAR Honda)	230
4	James Noble (Multitek Honda)	228
5	Brad Anderson (Pioneer Yamaha)	217
6	Mark Eastwood (Wiseco Honda)	160
7	Jordan Rose (Albion KTM)	128
8	Danny Smyth (Wiseco Honda)	107
9	Glen Phillips (GP-MX Kawasaki)	100
10	Jody Smyth (Wiseco Honda)	98

MX2

1	Tommy Searle (Red Bull KTM)	253 points
2	Mike Brown (CAS Honda)	216
3	Gareth Swanepoel (Molson Kawasaki)	210
4	Tom Church (Molson Kawasaki)	207
5	Shaun Simpson (Wulfspor Kawasaki)	203
6	Sean Hamblin (Swift Suzuki)	159
7	Martin Barr (Bike It/Dixon Yamaha)	151
8	Jason Dougan (Fork Rent Suzuki)	146
9	Carl Nunn (Bike It/Dixon Yamaha)	124
10	Ray Rowson (Molson Kawasaki)	114

gp wrap





CRACK SHOT!

Tommy Gun nicks a moto off Cairoli while up in MX1 Ken De Dycker just gets quicker...

Words and photo by Alex Hodgkinson

IN JAPAN it was King Billy and at Uddevalla in Sweden it's Tommy Gun who rattles up victory at GP level when the teenager becomes only the second rider this year to take a moto off Tony Cairoli – aka The Dominator.

"It feels brilliant! When he came again in the last few laps I wasn't going to let that one get away. I'm getting faster all the time and I want to beat him again before the end of the year – when he hasn't fallen off too!"

Fighting talk but justified! In a follow-up to their little dust-up in Bulgaria, Tony C takes care of Pourcel on quali day at Uddevalla but then makes life hard for himself when he slides off at turn one in the opener. He's already 11th after a lap and thinks it's going to be easy but he reckons without Tommy.

When Tony finally gets past Gundersen, who rides him into the tapes time and time again, Tommy drops his times by two seconds a lap to escape and when the Italian gets closer with three to go the young Brit does the same again. Okay, Tony makes a mistake but Tommy knows why. "I forced him!" His confidence grows by the week!

And another shot in the arm for the Maxxis series comes in MX1 as Keeno kills 'em on the CAS Honda. No-one even sniffs him in race one and even a wobble in race two – "I started making mistakes and lost concentration so I slowed and recollected myself" – can't spoil his day. Steve Ramon takes the moto but second is more than enough for the overall.

All the Brits keep scoring in France, Bulgaria and Sweden and Billy bounces back from a Bulgarian smash to get better as the day goes on and take home fourth in race two.

Series standings

MX1

1	Josh Coppins (Yamaha Rinaldi)	401 points
2	Steve Ramon (Suzuki Geboers)	312
3	David Philippaerts (Red Bull KTM)	257
4	Jonathan Barragan (Red Bull KTM)	240
5	Kevin Strijbos (Suzuki Geboers)	235
6	Sebastien Pourcel (GPKR Kawasaki)	235
7	Ken De Dycker (CAS Honda)	225
8	Mike Brown (CAS Honda)	219
9	Tanel Leok (Motorex Kawasaki)	217
10	Billy MacKenzie (Motorex Kawasaki)	186
11	James Noble (Multitek Honda)	175
16	Gordon Crockard (PAR Homes Honda)	100
29	Brad Anderson (Pioneer Yamaha)	14

MX2

1	Antonio Cairoli (De Carli Yamaha)	439 points
2	Christophe Pourcel (GPKR Kawasaki)	337
3	Tyla Rattray (Red Bull KTM)	318
4	Tommy Searle (Red Bull KTM)	285
5	Pascal Leuret (NGS Honda)	270
6	Gareth Swanepoel (Molson Kawasaki)	224
7	Nicolas Aubin (Ricci Yamaha)	197
8	Kenneth Gundersen (Ricci Yamaha)	188
9	Matti Seistola (SRS Honda)	160
10	Anthony Boissiere (CLS Kawasaki)	146
11	Carl Nunn (Bike It Dixon Yamaha)	131
15	Tom Church (Molson Kawasaki)	94
17	Sean Hamblin (Swift Suzuki)	76
19	Shaun Simpson (Wulfsport Kawasaki)	67
22	Jason Dougan (Fork Rent Suzuki)	58
28	Martin Barr (Bike It Dixon Yamaha)	30
31	Jake Nicholls (Fork Rent Suzuki)	10
40	Elliot Banks-Browne (Swift Suzuki)	1

BOU'S BACK!

After a day two defeat in Japan series leader Toni Bou bounces back in Italy – despite a second lap fainting fit...

Words by g2f.co.uk Photo by Eric Kitchen

TONI BOU returns to the top of the podium at the Italian Grand Prix having suffered his only defeat of the season on the second day of competition in Japan. Bou's latest victory allows him to further stretch his lead over his closest challenger Adam Raga who simply has no answer to his four-stroke Spanish counterpart.

Toni's seven-mark winning margin in Italy does not tell the full story as he leads by double this amount at the halfway point before fainting early on the second lap. Bou arrived in the small town of Erba, just North of Milan, with a slight fever which worsens as the hot weather and ultra tough trial takes its toll on the 21-year-old. Despite this setback the Montesa teamster holds on to take his sixth victory of the season.

Takahisa Fujinami joins his team-mate on the podium in third spot after a brilliant closing lap fight back that sees the Japanese rider record the best lap score of the trial. Britain's Dougie Lampkin is also on a salvaging exercise as he makes his first outing since dislocating his finger at the Japanese GP. His lack of recent practice shows and the difficult hazards are far from ideal for a man who is effectively riding with one hand. However, Dougie digs deep after a poor first lap to finish in a brave fourth position. Albert Cabestany survives a nasty crash early on to complete the top five while Jeroni Fajardo sneaks home in sixth just ahead of James Dabill.

In the Junior class Michael Brown takes another big step towards clinching his first ever title as he notches up win number six to increase his advantage to a comfortable 32 points at the head of the standings. Fellow Brit Alexz Wigg still holds second in the series despite just missing out on a podium place in Italy.

American rider Patrick Smage causes the shock of the weekend as he takes the win in the Youth category in his first ever event at this level outside of his home country. Smage is scheduled to ride just three rounds this year ahead of a full assault in 2008. Patrick's victory brings a halt to Alfredo Gomez's 100 per cent record as he finishes runner up on this occasion ahead of his main championship rival Ross Danby.

Series standings

WTC

1	Toni Bou (Montesa)	137 points
2	Adam Raga (Gas Gas)	120
3	Takahisa Fujinami (Montesa)	103
4	Dougie Lampkin (Montesa)	88
5	Albert Cabestany (Sherco)	79
7	James Dabill (Montesa)	63
15	Shaun Morris (Gas Gas)	13

Junior

1	Michael Brown (Beta)	135 points
2	Alexz Wigg (Gas Gas)	103
3	Loris Gubian (Sherco)	94
4	Nicolas Gontard (Gas Gas)	92
5	Matteo Grattarola (Sherco)	74
6	Lee Sampson (Sherco)	56
7	Sam Haslam (Scorpa)	51
21	Richard Ellwood (Sherco)	3

Youth

1	Alfredo Gomez (Gas Gas)	137 points
2	Ross Danby (Gas Gas)	113
3	Alexis Cervantes (Sherco)	103
4	Patrick Smage (Sherco)	50
5	David Millan (Sherco)	49
9	Robert Andrews (Gas Gas)	29
16	Jack Challoner (Beta)	8



Adam Raga's world crown looks to be slipping away



SWORDY SWOOPS!

Ando and Lulu win as three-time Brit champ Stevie stages solid comeback at Hawkstone

Photo by still-mx.co.uk

HAWKSTONE PARK in the dry is hard work – when it's wet then hard work just got a whole lot, er, harder! Add to that a season-long lay-off and, to quote Mr T, only a crazy fool would chose the Salop sand to kick-off their comeback. Step forward Stephen Sword!

Round three of the British Masters MX series is Swordy's date with destiny. And while only an ocean-going dumbass would even so much as wonder whether the three-time British champ can run with the likes of a fully-fit Brad Anderson who races both Pro classes at Hawkstone, the Molson Kawasaki star's still got a point to prove.

And prove it he does! A 6-12 card at the end of the day may not be GP-winning form but considering it comes a full 13 months after a potentially career-ending crash it qualifies as a good day at the office for the speedy Scot. Good to have you back Stevie...

At the front of the pack Bad Brad wins the opening Pro 125cc race before a rear wheel puncture forces him out of the second. And with the Pioneer Yamaha rider sidelined it's Lulu Gregory who claims the overall with a 2-1 card from comfortable series leader Ashley Greedy.

Oop in the Pro Open division Brad's air stays in his tyres and he motors to a pair of wins from Jordan Rose whose consistent 3-3 scores see him home second ahead of Jamie Law's 2-4.

Series standings

Pro 125

1	Ashley Greedy (Par Homes Honda)	272 points
2	Alex Butler (Honda)	206
3	Phil Mercer (Delkevic Kawasaki)	206
4	James Lassu (Yamaha)	187
5	Lewis Gregory (Relentless Suzuki)	177
6	Andrew Wilson (Honda)	175

Pro Open

1	Brad Anderson (Pioneer Yamaha)	283 points
2	Jody Smyth (Wiseco Honda)	244
3	Danny Smyth (Wiseco Honda)	238
4	Neville Bradshaw (Par Homes Honda)	180
5	Glen Phillips (GP-MX Kawasaki)	167
6	Brett Hillman (Honda)	166

Amateur 125

1	Sam Simmons (Yamaha)	394 points
2	Tom Fish (Honda)	387
3	Jamie Dobson (Kawasaki)	377
4	Owen Delaney (Yamaha)	373
5	Anthony Kahl (KTM)	336
6	Luke Spence (KTM)	271

Amateur Open

1	Matt Lee (KTM)	411 points
2	Jonathan Slesser (Honda)	377
3	Stephen Wade (Kawasaki)	371
4	James Shaw (Kawasaki)	368
5	Matthew Lund (Yamaha)	341
6	Chris Neesam (Kawasaki)	287





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**David steps up to
a 250F at Langrish**



PARGAMES!

DAVID GAMES TALKS SCRAMBLY BIKE SKITTLES AND DIRT BIKE DOMINOES...

Words and photos by still-mx.co.uk

This month Rage is catching up with a rider who's been contesting the four-round MXY2 Championship that's hosted alongside the Maxxis British championship at Landrake, Langrish, Brampton and Pontrilas.

It's an invitational contest open to riders between the age of 14 and 17 with the riders taken from the ACU Premier and Intermediate classes. The machinery is the same as the MX2 events so it's a mix of 125cc two-strokes and 250 four-strokes.

The 16-minute plus one lap races are a chance for the young guns of motocross to show what they're made of in front of not only the motocross industry but a crowd far larger than they are probably used to.

Rage caught up with PAR rider David Games at the famous Langrish circuit in Hampshire which also annually hosts the Ken Hall Trophy.

Rage: Tell us a little about yourself David...
DG: "Well, I'm David Games, I'm 16 years old and I'm from Caerphilly in South Wales. I currently ride a PAR Homes Honda CR125 two-stroke."

Rage: What would you consider your career highlights so far?

DG: "I'm currently sitting in second place in both the BYMX and the Elite championships and that has got to be at the top so far in my highlights as I have never really been a championship contender to be honest. Winning a number of championship races this year and so early on has been a great feeling."

Rage: So far you have done the race at Landrake alongside the Maxxis MX1 and MX2 riders. It must be pretty cool being part of the proceedings at a British Championship round?
DG: "Yeah, for sure. It's awesome to be mixed

in with some of the best riders in the world and UK. It's cool to meet the riders you watch on TV, to actually be alongside them is great. But to be a part of their championship is a great feeling and definitely gives you an adrenaline buzz. Having your role models there increases your confidence and seeing your heroes race definitely helps you learn."

Rage: What do you think having youth races mixed in with such a major motocross event will do for youth racing in general?

DG: "I believe that being a part of the Maxxis will have a huge effect on the standards of youth riding. The level of motocross is so much higher up in the adult ranks than in the youth and I think the youth riders will take this into consideration and learn from it. The racing is so much more professional, hopefully more adult championships will run with the youths alongside in 2008."

Rage: I guess it is also a great chance for you to swap notes with the likes of Tommy Searle and to get out and watch them at work?

DG: "Yeah, hanging around with the top guys and being a part of the atmosphere is a great experience so I try to make the most of it. To be honest I don't actually ask for autographs and stuff because some day I'd like to be racing these guys not looking up to them but we will see how things go. But yeah it helps watching these guys, you get to go and watch how it should be done and improve your own riding skills."

Rage: Who out of the Maxxis riders impresses you with the way they ride and for what reasons?

DG: "I love watching Brad Anderson. I like his aggressive riding style and general attitude to racing. He never gives up and races like his life depends on it."



"I also like watching Tommy Searle – the talent the kid has is amazing and it's great to try and learn from. I like the way he never settles down – he's continuously pushing."

Rage: How do the crowds compare to the youth events – it must get the adrenaline pumping with the numbers that attend the Brit champs?

DG: "The crowds at the Maxxis are crazy. So many people love the sport I can't see how we get so many complaints about it when so many enjoy it. It's great to see this amount of people. It's funny because when you have autograph sessions you can just about manage to walk down the pit lanes there are so many people crammed in. It has a great effect on motocross and it makes the atmosphere a lot better."

Rage: You normally ride a two-stroke – is that through choice?

DG: "Although I am riding a 250F for this event I do usually ride a 125 – the two-stroke is a great bike. It was my dad and I that decided to stay on it this year as I don't want to rush in to the big stuff and have loads of pressure. Luckily PAR Homes gave me a deal for this year which I appreciate a lot, their bikes are awesome and Jon and Joey [PAR Homes mechanics] keep the bike singing and looking pretty."

Rage: PAR is a big team with riders in youth events all the way through to GPs. Is there a good sense of camaraderie between all the members?

DG: "The whole team is awesome and great fun to be a part of – it's definitely been the best year of my racing career. I tend to see equal amounts of both youth and adults but we all tend to have a good laugh when we bump into each other."

"Paul Rowlands is a great guy and it's good



The 16-year-old Welsh lad's in a real hurry

to go and see him for advice and guidance. Jonny [Nev Bradshaw's mechanic] helps me out a lot and is a right laugh, he entertains us all weekend and makes my riding so enjoyable."

Rage: So you are taking part in the BYMX, Elite Youth Cup, BSMA and KWS championships – how are they going for you at the moment?

DG: "This year is hectic to be honest, non-stop racing gets tiring and with my exams it makes it even worse. But I have stuck it out pretty well so far so it's okay.

"I'm running second in the BYMX and Elite, fifth in the KWS and ninth in the BSMA but I'm not having the best of luck in the Maxxis MXY2 so I don't really know. I'm pushing myself to win the BYMX and Elite as these are my main championships. I want to succeed but I have some hard opponents to beat."

Rage: What do you consider is the most important aspect of motocross to concentrate on to do well?

DG: "In my opinion I believe it's just keeping active and fit during the week and getting good sleep but mainly as long as you are happy and don't go into a race all bummed out then you're okay. If you go into a race with a negative attitude I think you are less likely to do well. But obviously your fitness and health plays a big role in it."

Rage: Have you ever been given a bit of advice that you have thought really makes sense and you have stuck to?

DG: "Someone once told me that the more you put in the more you get out. I look at this as the more I train and push myself the better my results and riding are going to be. If I sit on my bed all week I don't deserve to win. The kid that pushes himself training five times a week deserves to be the champion in my eyes."

Rage: Who would you like to thank for making you motocross life that bit easier?

DG: "I'd like to thank my mum and dad because without them I would not be where I am today. I'd also like to thank Andrew Marsh for everything he has done for me over the past years. Paul Rowlands, Claire and everyone else at PAR Homes Honda team. A big thanks to Jon for everything he has done this year. You've all been a great help – thanks!"

MAX!

EVEN THOUGH IT'S HOLIDAY SEASON MAX AIN'T SHUTTING OFF...

Half term holiday, hooray! I know by the time you read this half term is a distant memory but I know there's a few of you out there who will still be thinking about how much fun we had at the Dutch camp school. There were about 15 kids who came out firstly to Dunkirk where the track for a while made us all look like skittles falling over everywhere in the sand.

Taylor (my three-year-old brother) and Ruby (his friend) were chasing us on foot or quads and when we were on the floor they would come running over and laugh. After the painful experience of a three-year-old making fun of you we all travelled up to Valkensward to stay in Center Parc which is about 500 metres from the world famous GP track.

By the Friday we were all doing great at Lommel then all went our separate ways. Dad and I went up to Heerda where I had a Dutch championship the following day just to have a look.

The whole team travelled out to the third round of the International Dutch championship to come and help. The guy who brings the big truck (Lionel Viaene) gave me a trick new helmet as a present.

The track looked awesome. They had put a split section in and also some whoops. You might not believe it but it actually had a hill. I mean you guys who haven't been to Holland probably are thinking that it is not unusual but those that have been will know that there's not a decent sized hill in the whole country!

Timed training didn't go so well. I eventually ended up in fourth but had a massive crash. I thought it all had to come together for the race and funny enough it did. I got an amazing start almost pulling the holeshot and only with Luca Ninjhers in my tracks. By the next lap I was leading and gradually pulling out a comfortable lead.

In my second moto I got another brilliant start and was sat in third. I had Luca again and Jeffery Herlings. I made a good move on the first lap and went from third to first then I just gradually edged away again to take the win.

It was a great weekend and I'm now eight points in front in the overall standings which is awesome. It was great with all the team and some of my English friends who stayed out cheering me on!

After a successful weekend we travelled home in great spirits. While I was at school on Monday dad went and picked up a brand new 125cc for me to have some fun on. He then went down to the track to build an awesome supercross track to get me ready for Bercy.

On the Wednesday I had my first proper experience on a 125cc. It is so much easier than the 85cc – I got a few bum whips going but was pleased with how my first day on a 125 had gone.

On Thursday we all headed out to Denmark for the third round of the European championship. It was the first time I had been to Denmark and I was surprised about how much it looked like England. The track was nice but with it only being for the 85cc and 65cc bikes it didn't get very rough.

I had fun on Saturday putting in some good laps. I eventually ended up fourth in timed training. It was 35 degrees and with two 25-minute motos a lot of people would be feeling it.

In my first race on Sunday I got a reasonable start and was sat in third. The running order was Herlings, Clermont (the series leader) then me. On about the third lap I came underneath Clermont going for the pass and as I jumped across him he launched his bike on top of me – like Stewart and Carmichael last year at one of the nationals.

We both got going again pretty fast but I had jammed my throttle open, bent the front disc and also almost ripped the radiator off. I had to come in and pit. After my mechanic had sorted a few bits out I went back into the race. I was pushing through and I eventually ended up 16th. It was okay though because I scored four points and Clermont DNFed.

In my second race I got another pretty good start. I was in fifth but was soon into third again, this time it was Herlings then Tonkov in front. About four laps in I caught both of them and then got around them out the back.

I then pulled out about a five-second gap but I over-jumped one of the tabletops and landed in the bumps. I went down but was up fast and still in third. I then charged for two laps closing them in again and then got around Tonkov again.

I was right behind Herlings when I think the heat hit me and also being right behind him made it hard to breath. I then started being sick so I thought give it a rest for a lap and then go again. So I sat behind them with about a five-second gap.

Next lap was the two-lap board so I pushed again and caught them again. This time I passed both of them in one turn taking the lead. And also this time I made it stick.

It was a great weekend. Shame about the crash in the first race but now in the points standings there is only seven points between Tonkov the new leader of the championship and myself. So it is all very close. I can't wait until the next round in Markelo in Holland. We have MX3, European 125 and us – the track will be so bumpy.

That's about it for this month. Each one goes so fast. If you want any more info on what I am doing check out my website at www.anstieracing.com

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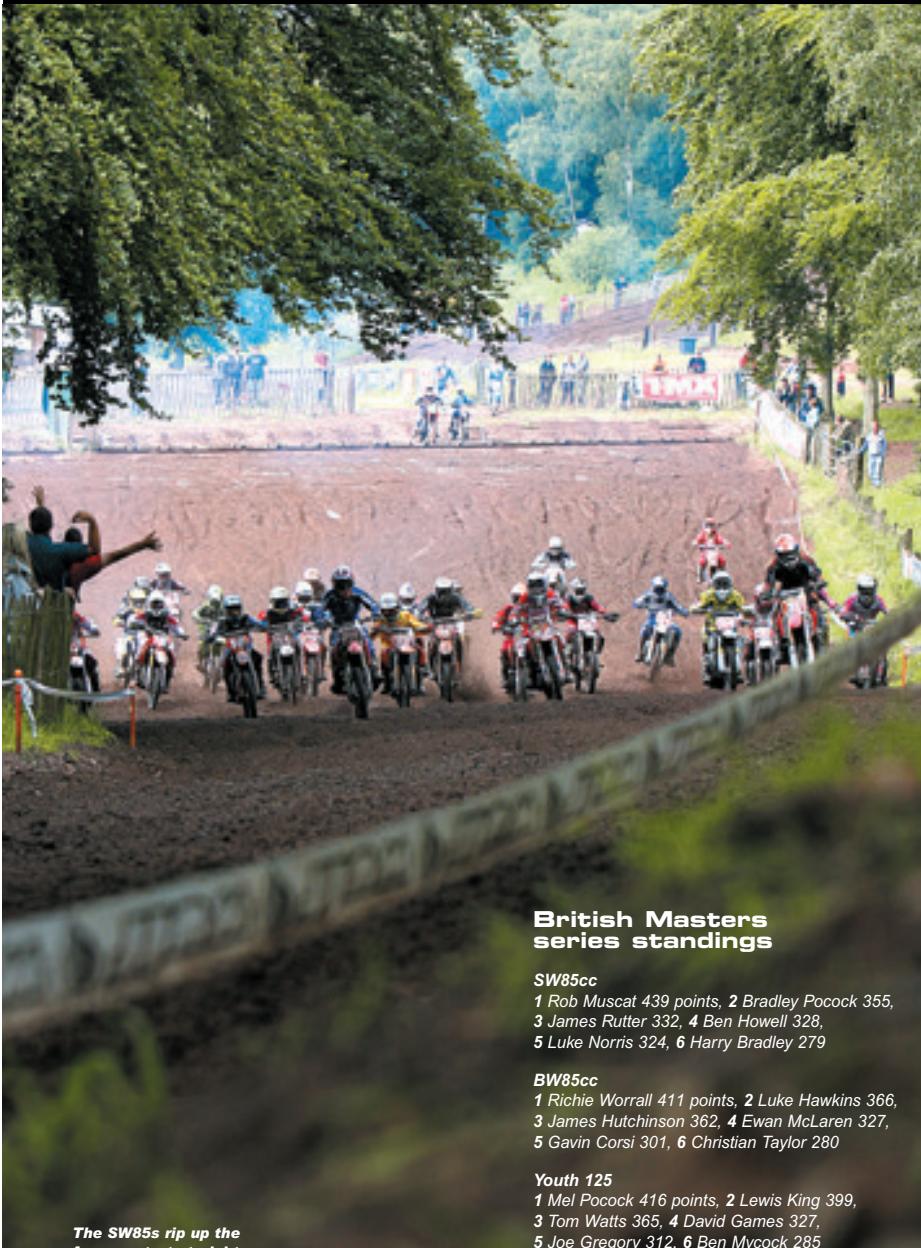
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The SW85s rip up the famous start straight

British Masters series standings

SW85cc

1 Rob Muscat 439 points, 2 Bradley Pocock 355, 3 James Rutter 332, 4 Ben Howell 328, 5 Luke Norris 324, 6 Harry Bradley 279

BW85cc

1 Richie Worrall 411 points, 2 Luke Hawkins 366, 3 James Hutchinson 362, 4 Ewan McLaren 327, 5 Gavin Corsi 301, 6 Christian Taylor 280

Youth 125

1 Mel Pocock 416 points, 2 Lewis King 399, 3 Tom Watts 365, 4 David Games 327, 5 Joe Gregory 312, 6 Ben Mycock 285



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SPORTS ROUND-UP!

A SLOW MONTH FOR SCHOOLIE SPORT SEES THE BRITISH MASTERS HEAD TO HAWKSTONE

Wet weather and deep sand are order of the day at round three of the British Masters MX series at Hawkstone Park in Shropshire. With no 65cc class being run in this year's series it's the small-wheel 85s who get things going...

Luke Norris opens his weekend account with a moto win on his way to second overall but there's no stopping series leader Rob Muscat in the next two races with the Honda rider adding yet another first place trophy to his mantelpiece.

The big-wheel class overall is won by Daniel Hutchinson who doesn't win a moto all

weekend but is super consistent. James Hutchinson – no relation – takes the first and third moto wins and is third overall while Richie Worrall steers his Suzuki to two fourths and a win for second overall and first spot in the series standings as he overtakes the injured Christian Taylor.

In the Youth 125 class Daniel Arnold returns from injury to take the overall win with a brace of seconds. Meanwhile PAR Honda's 14-year-old speedster Mel Pocock steals the series lead from Team Green's Lewis King by taking second overall over the weekend ahead of Pope KTM's Max Tranah.

NEXT MONTH

You could be going to the final round of the Maxxis British Motocross Championship as Max Anstie's special guest as Kawasaki UK put together a great competition where you can also meet top Team Green riders including Billy MacKenzie, Stephen Sword and Tom Church. Yaaaaay!

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WORDS BY BILLY MACKENZIE PHOTO BY SUTTY

ROLLERCOASTER!

BILLY STARTS THE MONTH ON A HIGH, THEN THE BOTTOM FALLS OUT OF HIS WORLD IN BULGARIA BEFORE HE RALLIES AGAIN IN SWEDEN

THINGS WERE still firing after Japan. We came home for the British at Langrish – a proper old-school track and not normally what I enjoy but I got stuck in and came away with the overall – my first in MX1 – so that was something to smile about.

Everyone was feeling a bit second-hand from the jetlag and it didn't help that it was a blistering hot day – not that I'm complaining about the weather as I'd rather it be hot than wet! I had luck on my side that day too. The first race I had some arm-pump early on after getting a crap start, I moved through pretty quickly but then had to try to breathe. Gordy came steaming through and I didn't have an answer for him at the time – I was struggling a little and couldn't up the pace but, like I said, luck was with me and Gordy broke a chain.

The next race I had a good start and moved through to the lead by the first corner and from then on I just charged. I had Brad behind me the whole way and I was only pulling tiny gaps each lap – the max I got it to was about six seconds. I kept thinking 'okay, I have to have broke him now' but I kept looking over and he was there every lap! He just doesn't understand the words 'give up' – that's what I like about Brad.

Off to Bulgaria next and it was the point of a slight turnaround in my season again! I was fastest in most of the free practices and stuff, always battling for top three, feeling very confident and comfortable on the bike but I was s***ting through the eye of a needle all day! I ate some bad meat at the restaurant at the track and by the time qualifying came around I was feeling really bad! So qualifying went horrible – I was in 12th or something and I was so pissed off.

I tried to sort it out and stuff for next day although it still wasn't good. The first race I got off to a good start but off the first jump I launched it too far and landed really squint, twisting the forks inside the clamps, so I was trying to ride with twisted bars for the first lap. I thought 'just get used to it, you got a long way yet' but I came down the big hill into the finish line jump too hard, the back side of the front mudguard caught my front wheel as the suspension compressed and jammed my wheel in the air. So I had no control in the air and when I landed I was off-balance and lost the front end in the corner. I was running top six at the time so there were a few guys behind me and a couple of them ran straight over me.

I had some road rash and I hurt my ribs – I didn't think much of it to be honest, nothing a little painkiller wouldn't fix I thought. But after pulling out the first race I came to the line for the second a bit bashed up. I got a great start but it didn't last long, I just kept dropping back and couldn't breathe or turn the bike – total disaster weekend!

So from then on it has been a bit of a struggle – especially at the British at Desertmartin. It wasn't the pain that was making me ride bad, it just felt like I

had arm-pump in the left-hand side of my back so after 15 minutes of fast laps round Ireland I couldn't stand up anymore. Man – excuses, excuses, huh? I'm just glad it was only a couple weeks this year – last year after breaking my hand I never got back into the swing of things.

In Sweden I was glad to put the gremlins behind me and although it was still awkward to ride I was fully prepped with ice packs and freeze spray this time. First race was a bit gay, I didn't have the bike set-up right so struggled through for seventh place. The good thing though was I kept pushing – even with some arm-pump – and I was happy I finished the race strong. The second race I changed the bike a little and felt good again and charged through from 10th to fourth and was really enjoying the track for once.

That was the last race so it's on to Whitby now and I'm ready to take some wins from Kenneth – he's won too many races this year and after Ireland I really ain't in a position to try to protect a championship lead so it's gonna be all out this weekend, kinda like Tortelli's best moments! Go find it on YouTube – he was so awesome!

More good news is I am in the des Nations team again. Right now it has been decided that me, Tommy and James are in the team but that was Rob's decision before resigning so now it's up to...Mark Eastwood! *applause!* Easty is awesome and I go riding and practising whenever I can with Mark. He is full of knowledge and totally on my



wavelength – he will be an awesome team manager. I can't wait for the trip to the USA – I hope the ACU book us some business class seats too! Hint, hint.

A big thanks to The Simpson family and Wulfsport for getting my bike to Ireland and Sweden, even though it was a bit of a scary ride for my poor old steed with Homer crashing the truck and stuff. But they got her there and I'm very grateful.

Also, there is a new track in Scotland which is awesome. I've been racing on it since I was six but now Johnny has got into it with Big Dave and turned it into another potential GP track. So anyone north of the border or just south, I would recommend getting your ass to Duns for a good weekend's practice.

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